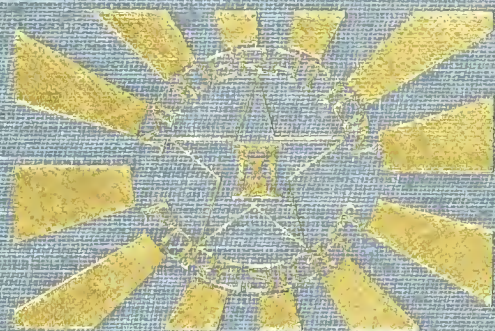


Mr. Man



Victor de Kubinyi

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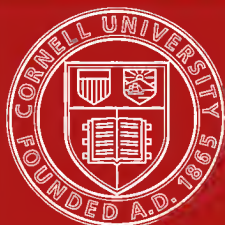
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# Mr. Man

By

Victor de Kubinyi

*Decorations by the Author*



NEW YORK, 1920

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TO THE MEMORY OF  
THEODORE ROOSEVELT



*"It is simply common sense to recognize that there is the widest inequality of service, and that therefore there must be a reasonably wide inequality of reward, if our society is to rest upon the basis of justice and wisdom."*

*(T. R.)*



**Mr. Man**



## DEDICATION



HUMAN nature is eminently good. It was meant to be so and has kept being good throughout the ages and was, perhaps, at its best during its recent period of madness. This may seem a paradoxical statement, yet it is true.

Man was made to the image and likeness of God. The foremost inborn qualities of human nature, therefore, are patience, faith and love. Considering, however, that man is not purely divine, allowance must be made—and a very generous one—for the frailty of the human race. Life, at its best, is a desperate fight for the survival of the fittest, waged between the inborn divine spark and the likewise inborn animal instinct respectively. Under conditions called normal, when everything goes smoothly, the inborn divine spark is in danger of being dimmed by the animal instinct;—resistance being at an ebb, the foremost inborn qualities of human nature, patience, faith and love are being confronted with some ugly and very easily acquired habits, among which greed, hatred and lust are the most predominant. Laziness, both physical and mental, is being fostered by these ugly habits. And money, that green-eyed monster, is an adept in covering these habits with the cloak of respectability. Thus, it happened that as

there was too much money too easily got the human race, after a more or less honest struggle lasting for nineteen centuries, found itself in a muddle. Genral confusion prevailed and seemed to threaten with permanent domination. Patience, faith, love, greed, hatred and lust got all mixed up and the cunning mischiefmaker, money, had a good joke on the human race. The joke, however, went a bit too far. The general confusion, in turn, led to chaos, which again resulted in a pandemonium and thus came the inevitable: WAR. Hell itself had to be let loose to bring man to his senses and real hell it was. But it was well worth it, just as it would be a good thing if one were permitted to get a good taste of real hell, that of fire and brimstone, in order to get a first-hand lesson of the dangers of conceit and thus have an inducement to behave.

The world has paid dearly. Man went through a terrible trial. It almost seemed beyond endurance. Yet the race prevailed, its inborn good qualities conquered the likewise inborn bad habits and the latter are being held in check, let us hope for many generations to come. The fittest has survived, the divine spark has won. Flesh once more has become what it was originally intended to be: the handmaid of soul.

In this spirit I lovingly dedicate this book to the thinking youth of Great America.

Vivant, crescant, floreant!

VICTOR DE KUBINYI.





## OUR HERO



HAT is a "hero"?

A rather ticklish question this.

Recently there was abroad a variety of definitions. Through a rather queer coincidence—or was it fate?—the chief requirement of a hero seemed to be physical strength. There were pugilists and ball players and high divers and a score of others who became the victims of hero-worship. Not so much because they sought this distinction, but chiefly because the restless world was bound to have heroes.

There were others too, for instance evangelists of the 'better than thou' variety, who led people to believe that they had a sort of first mortgage on salvation. And as the world grew more restless, it succumbed to these also.

Again there was another variety which perhaps never dreamed of claiming hero-worship but got its share thrust upon it, willy-nilly. Self-made men they were called. This, of course, was a misnomer as it was then in many cases applied, for the mere fact of turning from a poor homeless urchin into a captain of high finance or industry was more than amply sufficient to put these self-made men upon the pedestal of adulation, and so it happened quite often that pigmies, idiots with more luck than

brains and not infrequently outright mountebanks and crooks were occupying boxes in the amphitheatre of the world, while many a really and truly self-made man was pushed onto the grand stand. And many of the latter, indeed, preferred this place of oblivion to that of prominence, for they did not like the idea of being mixed up with some of their self-styled 'fellows' of doubtful antecedents.

Then something happened. An unexpected, or at least un-looked-for snatch turned the tide. A terrific storm swept the world and threatened to tear out well ordered, civilized life roots and all. \* \* \* And after a little while we heard the whistles blow and hurried to meet our boys in khaki. We called them "our heroes" and heroes they were, for they risked everything in order to gain nothing for themselves. America won the Great World War, thus assuming a task, the wonderful magnitude of which could be equalled only by its complicity. Every man, woman and child, who answered America's call was duly entitled to be called a hero.

To which of the above varieties of heroes then belongs Mr. Man?

To neither. He is but a plain citizen who silently tried to do his level best by God and by his fellow men.

Mr. Man is just the centre of this story. Such characters are also called heroes but he is far too modest to claim any title of distinction so we shall not disturb him in his incognito.

There is nothing extraordinary about Mr. Man. He

used his brains to the best of his ability and did all that he was called upon to do as well as he knew how. A quiet unassuming person he was, indeed, and large was the number of his friends and relatives. He was one of the nearly one hundred million who helped reconstruct life. Many were the heartaches and not few the disappointments that fell to his lot. Likewise, numerous were the encouragements he had met with. To his praise be it said—although he hates to be praised—he stood firm and, of course, not without strenuous and continued efforts on his part, he managed to keep a level head. Nothing should make him lose faith and nothing should let him get conceited. With such a sane program how could he help but succeed.

Some details about his personal history?

Knowing Mr. Man and his sturdy modesty, we should not like to dwell upon personalities. So just let us say this much: He was born in the United States of America. Born to be a free man. It cost him many hard knocks to realize the real meaning of the greatest of all accomplishment, that of being free and knowing it. He took all the knocks cheerfully and started out with firm determination to assert his right to freedom and to share it with his fellow men of every creed and nationality. A busy person he was. He could be found in business, on the highways, in the pulpit, behind the counter and in the factories and shops. In fact there was no profession or occupation in which one would not meet him. He was very busy and while occupying himself from the wee

small hours of the morning until late after sundown, he always kept his eyes open. He was possessed with a tremendous amount of ambition. In fact he was willing and ready to do everything. No wonder that somehow he drifted into the habit of minding everybody's business, consequently, sometimes neglecting his own. Yet, he meant well. This was his luck. For as long as one means well and keeps his eyes open he is bound to come out on top.

It did not take Mr. Man too long to find out that the greatest and by far the hardest task is that of finding one's self. The magnitude of this enterprise and particularly the numerous and very intricate difficulties presenting themselves in this connection appealed to his ambition, and being a man who was born good and wanted to stay good he was bound to succeed. So he did. What is more, he did not stingily keep the hard earned fruits of his success to himself, but let all the world share them with the largeness of his heart. A very good plan, for the more he gave the more there was left for him. He was the Great Lover in the truest and before his time unknown sense of the word. He loved the world. How, then, could the world help loving him in turn?

And now let him tell his own story.





## THE STORY BEGINS

### I.



F it is true that the United States has the rightful claim to be called God's own country then my particular home should be called a piece of Heaven. At least I think that is what it was according to my recollections.

Above us the sky with its ever twinkling stars. To the east mountains that reminded me of watchful sentinels. Not that I then had the least idea what a sentinel really was, but one gets notions by way of intuition or hallucination, and it seems that I was not the only one who felt that way for all around our neighborhood these mountains were just called the "Old Guard." And they really seemed to act as such, with their impenetrable forests always maintaining their silent dignity. To the west we were bordered by a beautiful lake. We called it "The Waves." You see, this was the only water most of us ever saw or knew of and it signified to us what the ocean would mean to sea-faring people. Our lake was navigable too. Once in a great while a small vessel brought merchandise from far countries. Our enterprising grocer-postmaster managed to get in touch with a large mid-western mail-order house, and as a side line

he got all sorts of things that nobody wanted yet everybody bought. To the south a beautiful forest of some hundred acres led into the plains. To the north we were edged in between small farms. We called them ranches because this sounded better, but in reality they were only small truck farms.

I remember having often heard my father say that God must have been in a holiday-mood when He created our country. I mean my particular home, for this was our country at large as well. We knew of nothing else beyond it as the nearest railroad station was some twenty miles away and not easy of access.

Hopeview was the name of our town. In reality it was but a village, and a pretty small one too, its entire populace numbering some three hundred souls. We somehow liked big words. I think our grocer-postmaster, Uncle Jake, was responsible for that. "Unk," as he was generally called, was a wise man of wide experience and as we thought, of great knowledge. Years ago he lived in a city of some ten thousand inhabitants not far from Chicago. That must have been many years ago, for Unk was well nigh seventy. We heard him tell our parents about his wonderful experiences.

"Those poor city fellows, however, have no advantage over us," he would say. "I will admit they had a brick school with four teachers in it, and two churches they had with regular ministers. Mind you, occasionally they got a circus too. But what is all their glory compared with our country. Look at these mountains yonder! Like so

many knights serving as our guard of honor. See that lake? It's fit for the angels to bathe in. Those beautiful trees seem to me as so many spires of a cathedral. And the plains there remind me of the pastures of heaven on which God's own sheep are grazing."

He spoke a good English, Unk did. Where he got it, no one seemed to know. Just as it was a mystery where he came from. If I remember rightly, I heard it once said that Unk had seen better days and that the fever of adventure had brought him to the spot where Hopeview had grown up in search of gold, and that he got stranded and having nothing else to do, started our town. The fact that he was everybody's Unk seemed to bear him out on these things which were never talked about openly but occasionally whispered. Be it as it may, we were mighty glad to have our Unk. He was our grocer, judge, postmaster, mayor, walking encyclopedia, even doctor in some emergencies.

Hopeview had but one man who might have been Unk's rival had he cared for such honors. Father was the one. He stood over six feet in his stockings, had a clear cut, open face and also spoke a good English. He called it "American." I think if he had been a famous stranger instead of being my father, I could not have admired him more, if he would only have parted with his mustache. And what a mustache it was! It hung down a goodly six inches on each side of his mouth. His name is immaterial, but I know he was of Scotch-Irish descent and he spoke and acted as if he owned the countryside.

Not that he was conceited. Heaven forbid! He just loved every inch of it so much that he thought it all belonged to him. As a rule father was very reticent. He might have had a secret he was brooding over. Just as like as not. He seldom spoke, and used short, abrupt sentences. I thought he was pretending at severity. Some people were afraid of him because of his voice and his looks. He looked straight into everyone's eyes. In fact he seemed to look right through you. And his voice was loud, commanding, but there was something silvery in it that made me love it. I said father was reticent. Once opened up, however, he would talk for an hour at a stretch.

"Well, friends, you watch and see. Our country will get on the map yet and with a splash, too." Of course he meant Hopeview, you would think. He did and then again he did not. He loved Hopeview but he also loved the United States, for he was a true dreamer. Father had a fairly good smattering of history. He knew of George Washington having once crossed the Delaware and that Lincoln was born in a log cabin and that the negroes are human beings.

This seemed to him sufficient to hold out most sanguine hopes for America.

"There just is no country in this wide world that could compare with ours, not by a long shot. There is but one D. C. (He always referred to George Washington with these initials, meaning "Daddy of the Country") and no other country could produce an Abe, mean-

ing Lincoln, either, and never will. You just wait and see what is going to happen."

Of course, he had no more idea of what was going to happen than anyone else but it seems there was an undercurrent of strange forebodings abroad which even reached Hopeview.

Mother was a darling. Just that. Always even tempered, there always was a smile playing around the corners of her delicately cut mouth and when the housework was the most arduous she always sang.

"Vôle, vôle, petite mouche . . . ."

Whenever we heard this little French ditty we knew mother was tired. Why did she sing in French? Why, she was of French parentage and birth. Her parents lived in the Argonne section. As a young orphan she sailed for America. She met father on the trip over, and they were married at the Irish Immigrants' home in New York. And our family represented a number of nationalities. We were Americans, though. Perhaps, including father, we did not fully realize this, but we felt it. And had we been able to put our premonitions into words, we no doubt would have said, that no matter where we originated, we intended to be Americans first and last, because the world needs America and we want to serve the world by being loyal to our adopted country, or something to that effect.

By the way, the United States was my real country, as I was born here, right in Hopeview. So were my sisters, Rosalie and Elizabeth, Beth for short. Johnnie, my little

brother died very young. He was suddenly taken ill. Mother ran for Unk, who came all out of breath; looking down into Johnnie's throat, he solemnly declared it was diphtheria. No one seemed to know what it was and it did not make much difference anyway, for little brother died after a few days. He had small pox. We buried him out in the forest, alongside of the other residents of Hopeview who have gone before him.

We had a school on Main Street with a real teacher. Miss Goodwin was Unk's partner and assistant. They said she must have come with Unk and I think she was his wife. Young Ben, our night watchman, once said he heard his father, Old Ben, say that Unk's partner is really his wife, that she came from a very fine family and that they had eloped, and now, that their plans had not materialized they wanted to be forgotten by the world. At any rate, Miss Goodwin who was well over forty but spry and vivacious, frequently told us in so many words that to be a citizen of the free republic of the United States was the greatest privilege any human being could crave for. Once, on the fourth of July, she gave us a regular speech on the greatness of our patriots. Sister Beth, inclined to be a little forward interrupted her.

"Teacher, you talk as if America was the only country that could boast of great men. How about Napoleon?"

Miss Goodwin never even frowned, nor did she reprimand Beth. She simply said: "Well, Beth, Napoleon was all right but he should have been an American citizen."

Beth, of course, did not know what to make of it, and sat down rather confusedly. At supper father usually asked us what happened in school. Beth told the story. Mother gave Beth one of her sweetest smiles, as if she would indicate her approval, for it was from the little stories told by her that we knew of Napoleon and rather grew to like him. She told us how Napoleon once saved a sentinel who fell asleep on his post from being shot by taking his place himself. And many other little stories which she in turn had heard from her parents. Father cleared his throat, filled his pipe and put it on the table. I poked Rosie under the table and we exchanged a glance of understanding. We knew what we knew.

Whenever father cleared his throat and filled his pipe just to put it on the table we knew he was going to say something.

"I think Miss Goodwin is getting rusty," with a friendly nod towards mother. "I know I should not talk this way about our teacher, but I think truthfulness is even more important than respect to our superiors."

Toying with his pipe father continued :

"Of course, you know without my telling you so that Miss Goodwin is your teacher, and as such, your superior, whom you have to respect and to obey. Yes, you should even love your teacher, for she is your best friend outside of your family and next to your parents. Heaven knows, some teachers are more to the children than their parents. But that is neither here nor there. What I wanted to

say is this. Every country has its own destiny and consequently its own history. We will find great men in the history of each country and they have just as much right to be considered great as our own leaders. It is a mere coincidence that the United States seems to have allotted to her a peculiarly wonderful mission by which the whole world is to be benefitted. We do not know what this mission might prove to be but we feel it coming. Washington felt it and Lincoln openly spoke about it. Now then, so far so good. If we are children of a chosen nation, let us be thankful for it. We might even feel proud. But, remember, conceit is the grave of all really great enterprises. So, no matter how thankful and how proud you will be, and may God give you good reason for both, do not get conceited and self-centered."

"Ours is a comparatively young country. America has made wonderful strides. The papers that come to us occasionally from the large cities all tell us of the great future. That all might be so. But heaven knows that we must forestall in good time any selfish pride if we do not want to become the laughing stock of generations to come. \* \* \* "

"Dear, you are working yourself up into a state of undue excitement," mother ventured to interrupt. "You know only too well that you must not give way to your ideals. We have been working hard all these years in order to let our children have a better future than we had. Our greatest difficulty was that of trying to check our ideals and dreams. We had and still have to face

stern realities and we must not dwell on things that might be."

Father looked at her as if he would say, bless your soul. "Well, mother dear, you are right and you are wrong. You are right in reminding me that I should not let my enthusiasm get away with me. There is hard work ahead for us. Plenty of it. I should call it drudgery if it were not for our children. And it is not all for our children, either. Where would the country come in if parents thought but of the material welfare of their children?—"No harm meant," to mother as she tried to remonstrate. "God knows I am willing enough to work for our children. And I might as well say it, that you are doing many times more than I could ever think of doing for them. But what I mean to impress upon the minds of these children is this. We are toiling for them so that we may secure for them some comforts of life. We do not wish to be slaves of our desires, however. Do we, mother dear? See, we would be nothing but slaves if we tried to provide for our children just for the sake of comfort. Comfort alone makes for laziness. We are doing for them all we can, we are giving them all we have and we want them to have more out of life than we ever had or might have had, so that they may appreciate it and reciprocate. And whom do we want them to reciprocate to? To us? Nosiree! We want our children to return to the world with compound interest all that we ever gave them. And this they will only be able to do if they maintain a humble attitude."

"The greatest men the world ever knew were those who were utterly forgetful of themselves. The world does not always understand big-heartedness born of true humility. They crucified Christ for it. Others have been called fools. And what do we see today? Many a man is strutting in greatness who should be behind prison bars, and on the other hand many a really great man passes by unnoticed."

Father took up his pipe. We knew he was nearly finished with what he had to say.

"Children of ours, who knows that but some day some of you will be called upon to fulfill an important mission. We, mother and I, want you to make good. Yet, be mindful of it, that whatever be your task in life, small or great, you will fail unless you stay humble."

Then, rising from the table, he kissed mother on the forehead and on leaving the room he said in a casual manner: "I am going to speak to Miss Goodwin, and you just keep on minding her."

"Oh, mother, isn't he wonderful!" we said in unison.

Mother smiled. How could she help it. She was proud of him. We could see it, and there was no use denying it.

"Children, if you mean to say that father is a real man, I agree with you. Yet there is nothing wonderful about being a real man; that is every one's duty."

Mother also rose, kissing us in turn and we followed her out into the little yard to help her weed some plants.

## II.

The fourth Sunday of the month was sort of a holiday for us of Hopeview. Rightly so. The rector of St. Mary's, the nearest parish, twenty miles to the south, sent his curate to us once a month. Father Andrew, a young priest, owing to the distance, usually arrived the previous Saturday and made his headquarters with Unk. In the evening he held vespers for us and we made our confession. Most of us did, as there were only three Methodists and a handful of Quakers among us. The priest's arrival was always an event, and anticipated and looked forward to from the hour of his departure to the day of his next return. Sunday mornings the whole town flocked to the church, which was no less a room than Unk's front parlor. Unk professed to be an agnostic. If he knew what that was he never told any one. I am inclined to believe that he just liked the sound of that word and it seemed to impress the townsfolk. In reality he was the rector's right-hand man. And his front parlor was set aside for our services. Miss Goodwin resurrected a reed organ from somewhere and played the instrument at vespers and at mass. When the organ first came to Hopeview it was meant to be a surprise and Miss Goodwin surely had her reward. The enthusiasm over her magnanimity knew no bounds. Being of a grateful disposition she rewarded the towns-people with and additional surprise, when, at the psychological moment she took up her chair, went straight to the organ and

played it for us. I was a small boy of some thirteen years when we had music at mass for the first time, but I remember to this day that father wiped his eyes when Miss Goodwin played the first notes of "Down in adoration falling." And father was a strong man.

Unk took it for granted that he should be the caretaker of the church and he did his job well, indeed. Sometimes perhaps too well. The front parlor he provided with three dozen chairs. Some of our townsmen constructed an altar and on Memorial Day in 1905 some things arrived from the mid-western mail-order house that made all Hopeview gasp. A fairly large crucifix, six oaken candlesticks, an incense pot and a carpet. Some candles came too, but as they happened to be of a poppy red shade they were later on exchanged for wax candles. All these things were blessed by the priest and have been properly used ever since. By and by some pictures were added to the ornaments of our church. Unk just got a notion to order some things; they came and were promptly paid for, everybody contributing to the best of his ability, and Hopeview harbored no stingy people for there always was a little balance on hand. Naturally, Unk was the secretary-treasurer and what not. The rest of us had no time to bother. Every able bodied person in Hopeview spent the day on the "ranches" or else kept busy around the house.

We were a hard-working town but somehow we did not get hardened by the work. Something kept up our good spirits and if there was anything that did it, it was

the family spirit that was predominant. You should have seen how our Methodist and Quaker brethren rushed to church on the fourth Sundays. At times they were talking of "hiring" an itinerant missionary for themselves but then dropped the subject, thinking that Father Andrew was good enough for them. The purest harmony prevailed in Hopeview and the occasional deaths were the only incidents that brought sorrow to us. Not that we were a gay crowd. But we were cheerful and God surely must have loved us a good deal keeping us cheerful some twenty miles away from nowheres.

Unk, the self-styled agnostic was jealous of the church. He swept it twice a week, and no one was allowed to enter, not even Miss Goodwin.

"My front parlor is the house of God. His servants may enter it at any time, his children only when he comes to them," which was rather strange for an agnostic to say, but then to this day I firmly believe that his self-professed agnosticism did no harm, because most people did not bother about it and those whose curiosity was aroused never to be satisfied, came to the conclusion that Unk's being an agnostic meant that he belonged to some sort of a secret organization or lodge.

The fourth Sunday I am speaking of was in September 1914. The day previous the priest arrived. This time it was Father John, the rector himself. He arrived about four o'clock in the afternoon and went straight to Unk's. People began returning from the ranches and the rector's buggy caused a mixed feeling of joy and relief.

"The monotony will be broken and we shall have mass, a good sermon and unburden ourselves in confession." Not that we had much to confess, but it did one good to kneel down before the servant of God and realize the nearness of the Master. Within about an hour's time all Hopeview knew the priest had arrived and Unk saw to it that they should also know that the visitor this time was the rector himself.

All Hopeview loved Fr. John dearly. We just could not help it. He seemed to us like a patriarch of the olden times, and he looked his part. His long white hair surrounded a ruddy face which was made attractive by the contrast created between the sharp lines and his kindly blue eyes. His nose, somewhat prominent, sat well over his well shaped mouth. He was little over medium height, rather lean but sinewy, the upper part of his body bending slightly forward. The rector carried his sixty-five years very lightly and when he preached he seemed to grow fifteen years younger. His clear, even voice reached one's very heart and his clean cut, unassuming arguments penetrated one's mind.

It happened occasionally that Fr. John came instead of his curate, so no one attributed particular significance to his visit at this time. It was his privilege to come whenever he pleased, and much as we liked his assistant it was good to behold this dear old face which always seemed young.

Father John was a real American priest, one of the

pioneer missionaries of our region and well known for miles around.

At supper on these Saturdays the priest was the topic of conversation. Some of our Protestant brethren seemed to dislike confession and were inclined to find fault generally, but their arguments never became unfriendly and usually for two weeks following the services there was nothing said, especially so when Fr. John held the services. His assistant was inclined to be just a trifle aggressive, but the rector was always the same fatherly friend to everyone, making no discriminations and using no favoritism, not even with Unk. In fact if anything, I am inclined to think Unk was afraid of him, in spite of or maybe because of his professed agnosticism.

"What do you say, Man, Fr. John never even once reprimanded me for talking agnosticism," Unk once said to father.

"Well, Unk, that's simple enough. If Fr. John thinks you do not know what you are talking about, he does not want to hurt your feelings by telling you so. Again, if he thinks you do not mean what you say, what's the use of scolding you?"

Unk, somehow, did not like this explanation but I suppose he made the best of it.

Lately Hopeview had paid to the happenings of the world at large less attention than usual. Occasionally we got newspapers from the North and the East. Unk wrote for them whenever he got the desire of talking to Hopeview. Sunday afternoons he would gather the men-folk

around his combination of a grocery store and post office and would read to them the news items that seemed to him most interesting. It was being whispered that he spent many a night in carefully scanning the papers and some rumor even had it that Unk was interested in stocks and bonds. But there will be rumors even in backwood villages.

When father and I strolled home from our ranch on that Saturday evening we saw Fr. John and Unk walking towards our house. The dear old priest looked so dignified with his long cassock, his slouch hat, leaning lightly upon his cane. Unk was walking alongside of him with an air of modest pride. As soon as Father John noticed us he waved his small hand. We met just a few steps in front of our house. After having exchanged the usual greetings, Fr. John sat down on the green garden bench and I can see him to this day, with the white walls of our home to his back, at the right and left our two latticed windows and the red geraniums in the boxes. The retiring sun threw a purplish golden hue over the scenery and the color waves seemed to form a halo around that slouch hat.

"Brother Man," the priest said, "Unk and I are in somewhat of a predicament. Unk tells me he mislaid the key of the organ, your smithy is ill so we came to you to ask you to open the organ for to-night's litany without breaking it."

Unk blushed, Fr. John smiled and father laughed.

"Why Father, you better tell Unk not to be so jealous

of the church. He lets no one enter and some nice day there will be something missing and what then?"

Father had a way with him that his jokes never offended.

"You certainly are a wise one," Unk retorted. "Next thing you know you will be telling me the organ needs tuning up."

Fr. John visited with us for some time. Mother and the sisters came to greet him and then he strolled away with Unk, father promising him to come to the church and to open the organ right after supper. Father had a knack of being a Jack of all trades and he never gave the matter another thought.

At eight o'clock the inhabitants of Hopeview began to gather around Unk's house. Father could not find his tool box so we were a little delayed and it so happened that by the time we reached the church the services had all but started.

Miss Goodwin was getting impatient. She was to play the litany, but how could she with the organ locked up and no key. She heaved a sigh of relief when we arrived with father, who forthwith applied his tools and opened the organ without even scratching it. Miss Goodwin, by sheer force of habit, let her fingers run over the keyboard by way of a prelude. Oh, and did it not sound funny! I could not help smiling and looked up at father.

"Miss Goodwin, Unk thinks this organ needs a bit of tuning up," father said quietly.

It was a beautiful September evening, this one partic-

ular Saturday I am speaking of. The church was filled to its capacity. While Miss Goodwin struggled with her organ as best she could, trying to keep the children from grinning, Unk busied himself around the altar, lighting the candles and setting everything aright. Perhaps, in his heart of hearts he was yearning for his poppy-red candles of yore.

Through the open window a fragrant breeze brought the greetings of nature while the birds sang a hymn all their own. Else all was quiet. No steamboat fog-horn, no clatter of railroads was there to break the solemn quietude. Then Fr. John appeared in his surplice and all went well. We were used to wait until the priest had left the church and so we were rather surprised when Fr. John, the litany over, instead of passing out of the room went back to the altar, hat and cane in hand.

"My children, I wish to ask you all to come to mass tomorrow morning, at the usual time, eight o'clock. I have something on my mind and I want you all to pray with me in the morning." With this he passed out. On leaving the church, we found Fr. John on Unk's front porch, where he visited with those of Hopeview who could spare the time. None of them thought of asking him what he had reference to when asking all to attend mass next morning. It was understood that all would attend who were able to. Thus, the fact that his remark indicated that something of importance was pending did not change the minds and the attitude of our parents, and they came home without any particular amount of

curiosity and we went to bed without even seriously wondering what it might be. Not that we were careless. On the contrary, we were very much interested in everything that pertained to our community, but we thought, "why worry? Father John knows what he is talking about and he will tell us what is on his mind when he gets good and ready." Besides, our conscience was clear. There were no gamblers, no crooks nor thieves nor prostitutes in Hopeview. Ours was a truly clean life. It might be said that we were good because we had no opportunity for being otherwise. Maybe so. Yet, let me tell you, it is no joke to be good when you are working on the field say fourteen hours a day for a mere living. For being good really means being kind to your fellow man and honest to God.

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The next morning, being the fourth Sunday of September 1914, found all of Hopeview at church. A good hour before the time set for the services the villagers began to gather in front of Unk's house, all in their Sunday best and in a strangely solemn mood of expectation. The morning was beautiful as only an autumn morning in the mountains could be. The fragrance of the air, the perfume of the trees and flowers and the lovely twitter of our little feathered friends formed a delightful harmony. Yet the entire atmosphere seemed somehow different from what it used to be. We were not of a curious nature, yet I am quite sure that the heart and mind of everyone was filled with a vague sort of anxiety.

Shortly we shall know why Fr. John asked the whole village to attend especially this morning's service.

Unk stood in front of his house, welcoming the arrivals. He was good at it. He had a friendly word or nod to every one and a smile for the children. A certain air of importance mingled with a dignity all his own pointed him out easily as the leader of the village. This office he claimed, or rather took for granted and there was no one to dispute it. Mother, sisters and I were waiting with the rest. Nearly all of us were there. After a little while father came, strolling leisurely alongside of our next-door neighbors, the Wellmans. Mr. and Mrs. Wellman almost belonged to our family. They have been our neighbors ever since my parents came to Hopeview and their only daughter, Ann Mary, was our best friend. We grew up together, romped and played together and shared all of our little pleasures and joys.

How well Ann Mary looked this morning. For the first time it dawned upon me what a stately girl she was. Eighteen only, yet a full grown woman of stately appearance. Her auburn hair made a pleasing contrast to her dark blue eyes. Indeed, I thought, Ann Mary was a handsome girl. And while I was watching their approach it occurred to me that I must have missed a whole lot by not having noticed her charms before this. True, we never thought of each other as anything else but playmates. At least I did not, so I think. Hardly four years her senior this would have seemed quite natural. And this morning I felt thrilled at her sight. Would it not

be glorious if some day Ann Mary should be more than my playmate? This question came all subconsciously and I had no time to answer it even had I intended doing so.

Unk went to meet father and the Wellmans while I involuntarily stepped forward to bid the girl a rather formal good morning. We shook hands for the first time in our lives and she smiled and was so lovely.

"Good morning, aunty," she greeted mother. "Oh, how wonderful nature is this morning. And still I am almost afraid to enjoy all this beauty to the full."

"Bless you, little girl, you look like a morning-glory," said mother smilingly.

We went into the house and occupied our seats. Everybody was there, the Methodists and Quakers and all. And Miss Goodwin began to play the little organ and Unk got busy around the altar.<sup>1</sup> Ann Mary sat right in front of me alongside my sisters.

At Fr. John's approach the whole congregation rose. The mass went on as usual and the majority of the congregation received communion. Somehow this service seemed to me more solemn than any one I have attended.

Then came the sermon. Fr. John never offered any explanation why on the previous evening he extended a special invitation to all to be present this morning. He just talked in his usual, kindly, convincing manner. It seemed to me that his voice was not quite as steady as it used to be. Perhaps he was aging.

He went on telling us things which were good to

listen to. Kindly words of encouragement sounded so well from the lips of this true servant of God.

"You have been living near to God all these years, my friends and may it be granted to you to always maintain this attitude. No doubt there might be many who would pity you because of the limitations of your daily lives. Some may even smile at you. Yet, all that really matters is a clear conscience and this is easier to maintain far from the turmoil of the world."

"Much as I appreciate your secluded life, I thought I would ask you to get in touch with the outer world. Not for the sake of imitating it, but merely for the sake of learning a little more of what is going on around you. It seems the time has come when we have to begin thinking on a larger scale. Perhaps, we have been a little too much self-centered, and lost sight of the fact that there are others living in this world besides ourselves."

"Divine Providence seems to have called the human race to task. Unity of purpose, so it seems, will take the place of exclusive traditions. There is war in Europe at present. No one can know how long it will last and how far it will spread and in giving way to one's thought it does not seem a remote possibility that the entire world might become involved in what seems to be assuming the proportions of a terrible struggle. I do not like to disturb you in your peaceful pursuit of happiness, but I felt called upon to give you a warning and to induce you to prepare yourselves to meet emergencies the magnitude of which no one can fathom."

Then good Fr. John went on telling us how the war in Europe had started and that we ought to keep ourselves posted. For this purpose he will see that we shall occasionally get newspapers from the larger cities. It is true enough that we had paid very little if any attention to the outside world and thus we were rather taken aback by his announcement. A few weeks ago a somewhat hazy rumor of trouble in Europe had reached our town. A traveling man talked about it to Unk, who in turn repeated the news to some of the men, but they all thought it rather a joke and that happenings in Europe were none of their business.

"We have been led," Fr. John went on, "by a materialistic view of the world and of life at large. Hard facts have counted only, the scientific spirit was predominant and there seemed to have been no room for ideas, visions which could not be converted into dollars and cents, and consequently faith is on the decline. Man's logic may have no place for the supernatural, but man's heart cannot do without it. This is a truth which humankind seems to have forgotten and which will be brought back to us by trials and tribulations."

"Be mindful of the fact that you are living in a world which is governed by the same desires all over. I do not wish to alarm you, but it does not seem improbable that all the world may get its share of the trials. Before God all peoples are equal and all peoples seem equally to have forgotten God's mandate of true brotherly love."

"Pray to God, my children, that He may give you

light to see and courage to look ahead and also determination to face bravely whatever might be in store for us."

The good priest's unusual talk aroused our curiosity and perhaps some fear, too.

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The Wellmans spent that afternoon at our home. They came over early after the midday meal and at first just lingered. Even though having lived next door for so many years, we did not know much of each other. This was more or less the case with all of us of Hopeview. We have been absorbed in our own daily tasks and it was not that we were selfish, but we just did not seem to find time to get really acquainted. We visited seldom with our neighbors and our intercourse consisted chiefly of occasional brief calls of the two mothers, mostly prompted by little household affairs. With us children it was quite different. We played together and went to school together and were good playmates, my sisters, Ann Mary and I. Somehow as we grew we seemed to grow apart from each other. Not that we got estranged but by and by we had to assume our share of the work, and since all of us did it willingly, there was little time for play as the years went by. And as there was no especial occasion for their visit on this particular Sunday afternoon, I think it was the spirit of anxiety involuntarily caused by Fr. John that threw us closer together once more. The Wellmans were not the only ones who called on their neighbors this particular Sunday. We noticed

quite a few of the townspeople walking into neighboring homes.

The meal was partaken in silence resembling a mood of suspense. Then mother and sisters attended to the dishes while father engaged me in a game of checkers. He was a master at it, but seemed distracted, paying little attention to his moves. With the alertness of youth I was only too ready to take advantage of the situation and was just on the point of winning the game when the Wellmans arrived. Father brushed aside the checkers and rose to meet the callers, I following his example. Mrs. Wellman and Ann Mary joined the women members of our family in their task, and Mr. Wellman, a usually very reticent man, with traces of hard work on his countenance, which however could not kill an expression of kindness, broke the silence.

"I am surprised, Man, at the way Fr. John acted this morning. Usually he is so quieting and soothing and to-day he almost impressed me as an alarmist."

"Wellman, to tell the truth, I was more ashamed than alarmed at what the priest said," replied father earnestly.

"How so?"

"You see I thought it was really a shame that we have not kept abreast with the times. We have been so entirely absorbed with our own little affairs. And what do they amount to, anyway?"

"I do not quite follow you, Man. I hope you do not mean to infer that we should have neglected our daily

tasks for the sake of reading newspapers, all of which do nothing but lie."

"Now, there, Wellman. How do you know they lie? Have you read so many papers lately?" somewhat ironically.

"No, Man, not lately, indeed. But there was a time when I spent considerable time and money on the newspapers and what did I gain by it? Nothing. Just wasted my time. To-day the papers will print something just to promptly deny it the next day. I am truly sorry for every cent and for every hour I idled away with reading newspapers."

"What are you, Wellman?" As the visitor did not seem to catch the question, father repeated it in other words. "What party do you belong to?"

Wellman smiled.

"I do not like to talk politics, Man, but if you must know and if you refer to the two leading parties of our day let me tell you I belong to neither. I had my fill of politics many years ago while living at the county seat. I even had a goodly taste of electioneering and got so disgusted with it all that I came here where I thought I would not be disturbed in my political views."

"Well, what are they?"

"I am neither a republican, nor a democrat. I am just simply a plain American."

Now father thought it was his turn to smile.

"You may smile all you want," Mr. Wellman retorted almost impatiently. "And I am surprised at you. A man

with your character, as straight as a die, certainly ought to know that the most of America's troubles and mixups and blunders can be traced back to the fact that our politicians, most of them, are not statesmen but simply politicians. Many a candidate will promise his constituents the blue skies with the stars thrown in while the campaign lasts. I heard once a candidate promise his people outright that he would see to it that the Constitution be changed if their particular interests should make it necessary. And when they get to Congress what do most of them do? Waste the time with filibustering and politics and the real needs of the country may go to the dogs or, at best, wait."

"Do you not think you are rather harsh? How about Washington, Lincoln, Roosevelt and the many others who built up this country to a leading rôle from almost nothing."

"Ah, my friend, but these men were not politicians. They were statesmen and patriots of the clearest water. Washington, as you know, of aristocratic British descent, never knew what personal ambition was. You may retort he had this country in the hollow of his hand. True, he ruled, but he attained this not because he had any ambition to rule, but because he knew how to serve the nation. The truest servant is the best leader. And the jump from a log cabin to the White House never made Lincoln lose his level head. As to Roosevelt, he at one time was the leading influence not only in the States but in the whole world, so to speak. It was not his ambition,

or selfish designs that put him upon the pedestal but his unselfish work linked with the magnetism of personality."

Mother, Mrs. Wellman and the girls came from the kitchen and Wellman thought they would not be interested in politics.

"We hope we are not disturbing you," said mother. I rose offering her my chair. Then the rest of the ladies sat down, and it happened that by the time all were seated there was but one empty chair next to Ann Mary and I did not need a special invitation. Somehow I felt drawn to the girl ever since this morning.

"No, mother, you are not disturbing us. We just talked politics and stopped when you entered thinking the topic would bore you," father said in a casual manner.

"Politics?" queried Mrs. Wellman. "What on earth made you do that?"

"Your husband started it by telling me how surprised he was at Fr. John's talking this morning the way he did."

"And what was wrong about his sermon?" asked Mrs. Wellman.

"Wrong? Mrs. Wellman, that man could not say or do wrong if he wanted to. If there is anything the matter with Fr. John I think he is almost too good to live."

"I am sure he would not admit that if you asked him," remarked Mr. Wellman. "In fact if I am sizing up Fr. John rightly I think he is afraid he is not doing enough. Nevertheless I repeat that I was surprised at

the way he preached this morning. Why, he as much as hinted that even the States might get a taste of the war."

"And why not?" retorted father. "Are we people of the States built differently from peoples living in other parts of the world? Are we not likewise under the influence of our personal desires? Are not many of us victims of ambitions, which in turn lead to greed and which again breeds hatred? I guess we are, only we do not know it. At least the folks of Hopeview do not know it. But there are others, I reckon, who know it too well but won't admit it."

"Father, I am afraid you are seeing things from a rather dark side," remarked mother.

"Hello! Good for you, Mrs. Man. Here you are taking up our talk on politics," cried Mr. Wellman.

"And why not, neighbor. As a rule, I am not a bit interested in politics, neither is your wife, and you men know it. For that matter, I do not think that any woman is interested in politics as such, and I also think all the men know it. But that does not imply that we do not think."

"Quietly and not unfrequently," observed Mrs. Wellman. The girls and I were seemingly stirred. Our interest was aroused as we knew we were going to be witnesses to an interesting exchange of ideas. The girls as well as myself loved our parents not only because we were taught to do so, but because we recognized their dormant qualities and we felt that in their quiet unassuming way they did their share of thinking.

"Quite so," from Mr. Wellman.

"Well, I am the last one to deny woman's right to talk," added father.

"You could not if you wanted to," mother replied. "You are too straight for that. Broadmindedness was always your middle name and somehow I feel you would make a mark in public affairs if you had half a chance."

"It would not be a bad thing either. Your husband has got an open mind and a level head and courage, too," said Wellman.

"How about yourself, neighbor?" father smilingly. "Do not start throwing bouquets at me or I shall take up your challenge."

Mr. Wellman did not like this remark and then and there the thought occurred to me that these two simple, hardworking men might have a store of knowledge and experience much larger than one might suspect.

Mother took up Fr. John's sermon.

"I think it was high time that our good priest made us rub our eyes. He just wanted to get us started to do some thinking outside of the narrow confines of our little lives."

"You mean he made us guess," retorted Wellman.

Father could not resist breaking in.

"Wellman, when it comes to making people guess, I think you have beat Fr. John by a good mile. Just listen, folks, he just said he was neither a republican nor a democrat. What do you know about that?"

"And so it is, my friends," Wellman said. "The Re-

publicans as well as the Democrats are mostly politicians, wasting time at it. The worst of it is that they are wasting the people's time and money and not their own. For this reason I told Man that I belong to neither party."

"But you must belong somewhere," father queried.

"Indeed I do. I belong to the tens of thousands of Americans who are hoping for the time when a new party will arise which will champion the interests of the States and the welfare of the people and not politics and party ambitions and rot like that."

All of us looked at the speaker, then at father. These two men had the gift of disagreeing without getting disagreeable. Father put his pipe upon the table, a well known sign that he was going to say something and so he did.

"Wellman, I must admit you are getting interesting, if a little visionary. You are dreaming of a new order of things when the supreme ambition of every one will be the welfare of the commonwealth. Well, I am with you and so are many others. But I am afraid the realization of your vision is a long ways off."

"Fr. John as much as hinted that the world is facing a crisis and that the States might be drawn into it. Well, history tells us of many a crisis and is the world any better off for it?" retorted Wellman.

"Don't forget that there is a difference, a very vast one, between a crisis and a cataclysm," father said.

"But, neighbor, who is talking of a cataclysm?" queried Wellman.

"Nobody, so it seems, but every one ought to. To tell you frankly, I think there was a whole lot between the lines of what the priest said. Adding two and two together, I think he wanted to warn us of and prepare us for a pending cataclysm, but did not do so for fear of frightening us."

Too bad, I thought, Unk could not be here. He liked big words so much and he liked to talk. No sooner had this thought crossed my mind than who walked in but Unk.

"Good afternoon folks," he said, looking for a chair. As there was none empty I rose. He thanked me profusely. Ann Mary followed my example as did sisters and so we strolled out into the little garden.

"I have picked up your last words," Unk continued, "and I gather you were indulging in some big talk." The windows were open and there was no fear of our missing anything, or at least what Unk would say as he spoke rather loudly. Father gave him the gist of the conversation.

"Crisis. Cataclysm. Big words. And do you know what they mean?" The self-styled agnostic had the innocent habit of thinking he knew it all and no one else. But he was polite about it and so there never was any harm done.

"I reckon we have a faint idea of it," said father.

"Why, of course," from Unk.

"Well, Unk, a crisis is a situation created by restless-

ness, dissatisfaction and sometimes, by monotony of affairs, and always tends to remedy matters. While a cataclysm is a crisis gone wild," explained father. A short silence followed this explanation. Ann Mary looked at me with a faint smile, which I returned in kind. I think we guessed that father's explanation went a few inches over Unk's head. Not that he was dull or anything, but we thought father's way of arguing was more solid.

"Now then," Unk started, "accepting your explanation, how did Fr. John come to talk the way he did?"

"And why shouldn't he?" retorted father.

"Why should he? I ask," said Unk somewhat heatedly. "You folks know I am agnostic. Yet I like Fr. John. Always did, and I like his curate and the rest of the clergy. We need them, because they are the dispensers of faith. And heaven only knows we need faith, and plenty of it. Faith not only in God but in ourselves as well"—

Father was bound to interrupt him.

"Well said for an agnostic, Unk," at which Ann Mary and I exchanged another understanding smile. Sisters were picking flowers and the girl and I just listened. If I want to be perfectly honest, I think the conversation going on in the house was for us a good excuse for holding hands.

"You said it, Man," we again heard Unk's voice. "You do not talk much, but whenever you do you say something."

And again we smiled.

"Thanks," we heard father say bluntly.

"Now, come, let us talk this out," again from Unk.

"What?" chimed in both men.

"Well, the impending crisis, or cataclysm, or whatever it was that Fr. John alluded to this morning."

## V.

Nature was too beautiful and the day was too nice and we were too young to listen any longer to a conversation which, we thought, really did not concern us, at least for the present. So Ann Mary and I started out for a walk. We returned just a short while before supper. She carried a big bunch of wild flowers, the first I had ever picked for a girl. I saw her home and on approaching their door she ran ahead to meet her mother.

"Look, mother, what I have."

Mrs. Wellman took her daughter in her arms and I parted with the promise to call the following Sunday. I had but a few steps to go to our house, but found time enough to realize that I had become really acquainted with Ann Mary. Upon entering the house I found mother and sisters setting the table for supper.

"Father left with Unk and Mr. Wellman and they will spend the evening together."

We had a very delightful meal. The plain but wholesome fare was spiced with the loving kindness of mother and sisters. They were glad I had taken Ann Mary for a walk and they agreed that she was a lovable girl.

After supper sisters busied themselves in the kitchen. Mother and I remained in the room. I moved a chair up to the window. Mother occupied it and I squatted on the floor next to her as I used to do when I was a small boy. We had one of our impromptu visits. If any one had listened to our conversation, he would have thought two good chums were visiting. The window sill was low enough for me to see sisters pass into the Wellman house after a little while and I felt my heart grow in noticing the wild flowers in Ann Mary's window.

Mother told me of the talk the men had after the girls and I had left. I told her in turn, that we heard some of it while lingering in front of the house.

"I know, my boy, but you missed the best part. The conversation got to be so interesting that father called in your sisters. I did not send for you because I was so happy to see you with that dear girl and I thought I would repeat the conversation to you." Mother went on telling me that after some lively pros and cons, the men agreed that the time will come when things will undergo a radical change, when the brotherly spirit will be uppermost. Politics will be cleansed and mother told me with one of her kissable smiles that the men even admitted that women will have a hand in this cleaning process of politics. And she also told me that the men agreed that the very idea of the States getting into this war was preposterous.

"As to the last point, my boy, I really think father and Mr. Wellman just let Unk have his way. The old man got so excited that they did not want to contradict

him. I am sure father and Mr. Wellman have some serious thoughts upon their minds."

"Do you not think, mother, that they should have told Unk plainly what they thought, once they got started?"

"I think, my boy, it was best they did not. Unk is a good man, but he has ideas all his own. I think way back in his life there is some sad disappointment lurking. I have known him for many years and I am convinced he is a man of intelligence. Sometimes I feel so sorry for him because something tells me he really does not like big words, and that he is not an agnostic and that he is just trying to talk himself away from his inner self."

After a short silence mother again spoke.

"I am worried about father. He seems not the same of late. He does not sleep well, is generally restless and even lagging in his work."

Mother wept silently into her kerchief. I tried to pet and console her as best I could.

"Now run over to the Wellmans and join the girls."

"I promised to call next Sunday," I remarked.

"If I were a young man I would cherish every hour that I could be with that dear girl. Now go, young Mr. Man."

Mother dismissed me with a tender kiss. The flowers in the window next door called: youth had its way and I left mother.

## VI.

I think the two weeks following this fourth Sunday of September 1914 comprised the most trying epoch of my life. I was torn between happiness and sorrow. Ann Mary grew to mean to me a great deal. Perhaps more than either of us dared to admit. Why should we not dare? She was lovely womanhood personified and I would be able to support her the way she was used to. Well, from childhood up we lived too near to one another, I guess, and so we had to get acquainted all over. There is such a vast difference between playmates and lovers. It took us just two weeks to realize that we belonged to each other. It was again Sunday, two weeks after our first walk. In coming home to supper from a walk with Ann Mary I just blurted out my secret. Oh, how glad they all were. Had I but fathomed that my love to Ann Mary would make them so happy I should have summoned courage to bring them the glad tidings long before this. I loved them so dearly that there was nothing I would not have done for them. I think I should have loved my Ann Mary just to please them. The fact that I did not have to pretend, added much to my happiness. Late in the evening we parted as the happiest family that ever lived. Father took particular delight in telling me how he will turn over to me the small property on the day of our wedding and that he will take charge of the post office. Unk had asked him to share his burdens, and that would keep him from idleness.

"I am pretty much tired and worn out and it will be the proudest day of my life when I make you master of the household, Mr. Man of mine."

Poor father, little did he realize that I should become master of the house much before the time he had set for it. The following morning he was dead. We were prostrate. Mother was the bravest of all of us. Ann Mary came over early in the morning, carrying a huge bunch of somewhat withered wild flowers and placed them on our dead father's breast. No explanation was needed. Mother glanced at me through her tears. Ann Mary opened her mouth as if she was going to say something. I could not control myself, took her into my arms and we were betrothed to each other at the side of father's deathbed.

Why dwell on sentimentalities.

Mother was too brave a woman and too good a mother to brood over something she could not alter. There was much to do around the house and sisters kept busy with her.

Fr. John came to the funeral. The services over, mother, sisters, the Wellmans and Unk lingered around the new grave, adorning it with flowers. The silence was too much for Unk.

"Beloved friends," he started, "the doctor from the city said my friend died of heartfailure. Let me tell you, the doctor was wrong. A man like this cannot die like that. His heart may have given out, but it did not fail. A true heart never fails. Your father," addressing me, "was true to his Maker, true to his family and his

country and so we have no business to grieve over his parting, for, verily, he has entered into his just reward."

Our hearts said "Amen" and we started homeward.

How empty the house seemed with father gone. It was mother's wish that I should occupy father's room forthwith.

"You are Mr. Man now, and I know you will not only occupy your father's place but also fill it. He held out great hopes for you. Follow his example and be true to your name."

## VII.

Father John was right that fourth Sunday of September 1914. America got into the war. When the news came there was not one moment's hesitation. I was the first to enlist. I never even asked mother. Had I done so, she would have been surprised. Ann Mary, whom I married shortly after father's death, asked me when the call came, if I knew what camp I would be sent to. I realized my duty, yet the courage of these two dear women made it so much easier for me. They gave me a nice send-off. Together with the other Hopeview boys that had enlisted, Unk tendered us a farewell party, and, of course, he made a speech.

"Gentlemen of the United States Army, I wish to tell you in behalf of the entire community, that we are mighty proud of you. You have joined the army of a nation which could not stay out of this struggle because she realized that she had to join hands with those who are fighting autocracy, for centuries the menace of

human welfare. If I said we were proud of you I must admit that you likewise have a very good reason for being proud. You hail from one of the small hamlets of these great States, but this fact will, if anything, spur you on to become the equals of those who had by far better advantages than you, coming from large places. You have courage and faith. Faith in the just cause and in your determination to live up to it. You may never return to Hopeview again, but your memory will always live among us."

Unk was shaky. He aged much these three years. But he was the same old Unk, except that of late he never mentioned his being an agnostic.

Before leaving for camp Ann Mary and I went to father's grave, where I promised him in silent prayer to be mindful of it, that whatever my task will be, small or great, I shall stay humble because I did not want to fail.

Mother, Ann Mary and sisters were perhaps braver than I when we parted. There were silent tears, of course, but we all felt as if I was just going on a trip, sure to return.

Camp-life was both a novelty and a revelation. And in recalling Unk's farewell speech I often thought he was just a little mistaken as to the so-called advantages of the boys who came from larger places. I found that we from the villages were quicker to adapt ourselves to the wholesome if very strict military discipline. Of course, we did not know how long we would have to stay in camp, so we plunged whole heartedly into our new pro-

fession of becoming trained soldiers. Ann Mary, mother and I exchanged letters frequently and it was a great relief for me to know that they stood it so bravely and that all went well at home.

"Do not worry about us, sweetheart. We are all right and we hope to get you back soon," my wife wrote.

"Remember your father, my boy," was the refrain of mother's letters. I was resolved to do so.

Somehow all of us in camp were hoping never to see the front. We were no cowards and ready enough to do our duty, but the idea of killing did not seem to appeal to us very strongly. This idea seemed predominant although we never spoke of it. Then we received our marching orders. We were to break camp forthwith and to start for New York, embarking thence for France. No details were given, and no questions asked. Soldiers, so we learned, as a rule do not talk much. I had enough time to mail letters to Ann Mary, mother, sisters and Unk, as well as Fr. John, asking the latter to be good to the women folks and to look after them. I could not give them any address, so I told them I would write as soon as I reached New York and then, I said, I hoped to be able to give them a forwarding address.

### VIII.

The trip to New York was interesting if uneventful. My first trip was from Hopeview to camp and now I was on my way to the metropolis. The newspapers Fr. John provided Hopeview with during the past three

years did much towards giving me a better idea of the East in general and New York in particular. I was anxious to see the big city and felt proud in the anticipation of getting first hand information of the center of American life. That was what I thought New York to be.

I enjoyed the trip immensely, which was quite natural, and the change of scenery was soothing for my troubled mind. For I am not ashamed to admit that I was troubled. Mother's health was not what it used to be and if it was hard on me to leave her just when she had gotten used to my taking father's place, I knew it must have been doubly hard on her. Ann Mary was a great comfort to me. I knew she would stand by mother during my absence. No, I did not worry about my little wife. I knew she was a brave and sensible woman ready to meet any emergency. And Rosie and Beth, I knew, would also stand by mother. All Hopeview loved Ann Mary and mother; so humanly speaking I had no occasion—as I liked to tell myself—not even an excuse to worry. So I reached New York with a comparatively easy mind.

I had a most delightful surprise waiting for me. Two letters from Hopeview. The dear women were evidently gifted with a keener foresight than their new soldier, as they sent letters in care of the post office and when we were told that we may inquire at the post office we did so and great was my joy upon receiving these letters. One was from mother, the other from Ann Mary.

Mother wished me godspeed, assuring me that all was

well and asking me to write a long letter. My wife's letter was not as cheerful as I anticipated. She said she was not feeling so well of late. If I ever prayed heartily I surely did that night, praying to God that he protect my little wife.

We were told that our marching orders had been changed and we were given five days furlough. Having been established at camp we spent our leisure hours in exploring New York. I resolved to join the rest for want of anything else to do and perhaps more to ease up my mind. I began to get worried. In my dreams I saw Ann Mary coddle a little bundle and heard a small voice cooing. Then I saw mother and the sisters make a great fuss over Ann Mary and the little bundle and I wanted to be with them. The bugler's morning call brought me back to realities.

## IX.

I read over again the two letters with a devotion as though I were reading a prayer. Oh, how anxious I felt. In putting mother's letter back into the envelope I noticed an additional sheet of paper in it. Taking it out, I found it to be another letter evidently written the same day:

"Unk has left us for good. The other day he was found dead, sitting at his desk, pencil in hand. Miss Goodwin is heartbroken and all Hopeview is in mourning. Poor Unk did much good, even if he was a little queer at times.

"Fr. John came to the funeral, which was attended by the whole town, just as when father died. And the good old priest broke the tradition. You know he never preached a farewell sermon. He did not believe

in it and it is not at all necessary. God will judge and nothing else counts when we are once gone. Well, after Unk was buried, Fr. John said that the late Mr. Man senior, meaning your father, would no doubt wish to reciprocate what Unk had done for him, referring to the few words Unk had said at father's grave. So Fr. John said that he wished to remind the people of Hopeview that Unk had done a great deal for them and that they should remember him in their prayers.

"Before leaving the cemetery we visited father's grave and I told him he need not worry about you and that you will live up to his name, which is now yours.

"Mrs. Wellman and I went over the next day to Miss Goodwin to help her look after things and while cleaning up the desk we found a letter in one of the pigeonholes. It bore the address 'To my dear people of Hopeview,' with the additional legend 'I wish this letter to be opened at my death by Miss Goodwin and its contents to be communicated to my two most trusted friends, Man and Wellman.' Miss Goodwin opened the letter and began reading it aloud but could not get far for she was overcome with grief. She handed us the letter and we read it, Mrs. Wellman and I. In his letter poor Unk tells his story; how he came from a wealthy family and how he eloped with Miss Goodwin, daughter of his father's partner in business and how they came to Hopeview in search of gold and how they dreamed of a great fortune with which they would build up a model town, with a stone church, school, factories and all. Then he goes on telling how it was eating out his heart for having caused his wife such disappointment, and that both of them were too proud to admit failure and stayed right on the spot and how they had started Hope-

view. And further, he goes on thanking Miss Goodwin for her love and self-sacrifice and asks her forgiveness as well as that of the townspeople.

"We had guessed most of the contents of this letter, but we were surprised at their open admission and felt the more sorry for Miss Goodwin. By the way, she is going to stay with the Wellmans and Mrs. Wellman and I will take good care of her. Ann Mary's father will take charge of the post-office and young Ben will look after the store, the bulk of the proceeds to go to Miss Goodwin. She says she wants the money to erect a monument to Unk. Of course the letter will not make the rounds and we shall keep and guard the secret.

"I felt so sorry for the poor woman and my heart was just yearning for you and father, but I must not complain. I have got the two girls and Ann Mary, and may God give me a little grandchild to coddle until you return. And, mind you, my boy, should you find me gone you will know where you can find me and come out and tell father and me about it.

"God bless you, my child."

This letter kept my thoughts running. All the memories of Hopeview came back to me like a panorama. Poor Unk. Yet, after knowing what a disappointed life he had had I felt relieved that he was gone, and that Miss Goodwin would be well taken care of. And how I wished that mother's wish should come true and that all should go well with my dear folks. I did a great deal of thinking and wishing, and was on the point of getting moody when my room-mate called.

"Say, Man, how about going to the city?"

I put the letters in my pocket and rose to meet the

young soldier, who, by the way, was my corporal. In accordance with his wish, I just called him by his first name, Dick. A lively chap he was, full of life and enthusiasm. He hailed from Boston, where his father was a banker. A rich man's son then, with all the earmarks of one, but I must say in the good sense of the word. He was rather unassuming even if affected with a certain bragadoccio. A regular city fellow, had traveled a good deal and when the call came he enlisted as a private. He thought he would see this war through starting at the bottom.

#### IX.

Dick and I obtained our leave. On reaching New York my friend wanted to see some one at the Custom House, so we started thither. I kept my eyes open and tried to take in all that came my way not knowing whether I would ever again have the chance of seeing New York. The architecture of the Custom House seemed rather impressive and the hustle and bustle inside did not strike me as in keeping with the dignity of the structure, but Dick told me efficiency was the thing that counted and that the rest did not amount to much. He seemed to be well informed, for no matter what question I asked him he was ready with an answer.

From the Custom House we went to Battery Place.

"You see, New Yorkers are wonderful people; they think of everything. See that little hut over there? Well, that's the place we are headed for."

"What might it be?"

"One of the many agencies of the W. C. C. S."

"Of the what?"

"The War Camp Community Service," Dick explained somewhat impatiently. "Shortly after we got into the war, an organization arose over night which made it its purpose to look after the boys that get to New York. Now they have similar organizations all over the country. You see, the people, and especially the women, realize it that the boys ready to start for the front need a little encouragement, a little cheering up. Not that they are despondent or gloomy, or anything. No, my friend. The American boys are going to war in just as matter-of-fact a way as if they were going to business. It is their duty, so they do it and they might just as well do it well. Yet, we are all human beings and once in a while our heart will feel a little heavy when we think of our loved ones, and then comes the thought that we may perhaps never see them again. This War Camp Community Service is a great thing. Come, let me show you how it works."

A few minutes later we stood in front of the W. C. C. S. hut at Battery Place and in another minute we had all the instructions and information necessary for a sight-seeing trip around New York, and tickets of free admission to a number of places.

"Who is financing this enterprise?" I asked Dick.

"The people. The rich and the poor alike. Mostly the rich though," he replied with some air of satisfaction.

Later on I had occasion to learn that the rich as a class did in proportion much less than the poor. I have

heard of a grand masquerade given by some rich people at one of the famous New York hostleries. The affair was arranged for some war charity and some of the features of this ball were severely criticized from not a few pulpits. But what really interested me in this connection was to learn that this ball, including costumes, food, flowers, special entertainers and rent and all cost well over one hundred thousand dollars and netted for the war charity it was held for the grand sum of sixteen hundred dollars. I thought these rich people might have done much better by taking up a collection among themselves and turning over the proceeds to the particular cause, thus saving themselves a lot of unnecessary trouble and others considerable annoyance. Maybe I do not understand these city folk. You see I never had been anywhere outside of Hopeview until I left for Camp.

Dick took me to the Stock Exchange. When getting into the "pit" we attracted considerable attention. Soldiers do not seem to be frequent visitors there, but I guess Dick's influence got us in. A very dignified looking gentleman with white whiskers chatted with Dick for a while and was kind enough to honor me with a nod when my friend introduced me. In a few minutes the place began to get lively. Everybody seemed to get interested in something and all tried to talk at the same time. At first I thought some one had started a quarrel. Dick bade me keep quiet and watch.

"Now you will see some fun," he said.

Well, I admit it was funny enough to see well-dressed and serious looking men jump to and fro and yell at the

top of their voices and all at the same time. The dignified looking bewhiskered friend of Dick's offered a decidedly comical sight, all unruffled, heated up, with his necktie askew, acting and looking like a madman. When later on I learned what it really all meant, that this was the place where the prices of stocks and in consequence of the commodities and necessities of life are being fixed and that conscience had to stand back in a corner shamefacedly while reckless speculators are playing with the fortunes of others, I did not think it was so funny.

"What seems to be the matter with these people?" I asked Dick on leaving the Stock Exchange.

"The matter?" he asked in turn wonderingly. "Why, nothing, my boy. This is the Stock Exchange and that is the way those gentlemen are doing business."

"What kind of business?"

"I am afraid you do not understand," Dick impatiently said. "If one does not know what the Stock Exchange means and what it stands for, it is hard to explain. I am afraid you would not grasp it all," and dismissed the subject.

It seemed to me Dick was somewhat affected by our short presence at that famous place and I could not help wondering whether there was not something vitally wrong with an institution that was supposed to be of vital importance to the commonwealth and the workings of which were unknown to the masses. Well, I thought, may be it is not proper for a country boy to try to find out things.

From the Stock Exchange we walked on through nar-

row Nassau Street, passed a somewhat clumsy and unwashed looking building which Dick pointed out to me as the Post Office and arrived upon a clean square. Right in front of us stood a neat, yellow building of two stories. It impressed me as the residence of a rich man whose wealth did not go to his head. It appealed to me in its unassuming elegance and the American flag waving from its mast added much to its dignified appearance.

"This is the City Hall of New York," Dick explained,

Of course, we had no City Hall at Hopeview, so I did not appreciate Dick's telling me that this was the place where the Mayor, the head of the municipality, held his office, and in walking around the building Dick told me a whole lot about different offices located in the building, then we came upon the Hall of Records and stopped in front of a very tall building which Dick told me was the Municipal Building.

"Years ago," he went on, "the City Hall was large enough to hold all of the city offices. By and by they added the Municipal Court, then the Hall of Records and lastly this magnificent structure," meaning the Municipal Building. "And even so, there is not room enough for all the offices, many of them being located at the Woolworth Building."

He turned about and I followed suit.

"See that tall building," pointing at a structure that seemed to me like a combination of a church, a theatre and thousands upon thousands of stone blocks. "That's it. The tallest building in New York, at present. You have heard of it of course."

I pleaded guilty to ignorance, upon which Dick went on telling me how the man who gave his name to the building started out as a grocery clerk at three dollars a week and that to-day there were hundreds of Five and Ten Cent Stores scattered all over the country all belonging to this same man, who died recently leaving a fortune of several dozen millions of dollars.

"And all in thirty odd years," Dick finished with an air of mingled admiration and satisfaction. Of course, I could not help being amazed by this statement, but somehow I could not quite grasp how legitimate business could grow by such leaps and bounds.

Perhaps I did not understand what "legitimate" business meant. At any rate I did not bother Dick with what I thought he might take for irrelevant questions and followed him into the lobby of the Municipal Building.

We took an elevator to the top floor. The speed of the "lift" was amazing if not uncanny. Then we came down a few floors, alighted from the elevator and walked along the corridor as Dick wanted me to see how wonderfully this building was equipped. Much as I appreciated the perfect appointments, I wished Dick had foregone this pleasure. As we passed by several offices it seemed to me so strange that there should be so many people housed in this building whose occupation as indicated by the legends on their doors had evidently nothing to do with the administration of the municipality, while Dick had just told me that this Municipal Building had been erected for the sake of accommodating a number

of the city's offices. And when, on our way down on the elevator Dick repeated in a casual way that a number of city offices are located in the Woolworth Building, I became still more puzzled. How is it, I thought, that the City of New York had to erect a huge structure to accommodate several of her offices and now a considerable space of this building was occupied by all sorts of private firms, while some of the city offices had to seek shelter in another building, paying no doubt high rent, while there was a building that had been erected just for their accommodation.

Had I asked Dick about this I expect he would have told me in his kindly, at times condescending manner, that a boy hailing from Hopeview is not supposed to understand the ramifications of the administration of a city as large as New York.

In front of the Municipal Building Dick hailed an automobile, explaining to me that it was what the city people call a "taxi."

"Well, how does New York look to you?" he asked me as soon as the taxi got started.

"It looks good enough as far as the looks go, but I must admit I felt sort of confused and puzzled."

"What is the matter now?"

"There is nothing particularly the matter, only the contrast between the presumptuous appearance of the buildings we have seen with the strange impressions I gained make me feel almost uneasy. I remember, years ago, when I was a small boy the postmaster of my home town got some olives. He ordered them from the city

and when the shipment came the townspeople bought the whole supply. We got one bottle like the others and mother had quite some fun with it. After having tasted one of those strange green pills she thought they should be cooked first. Finally we ate them. I must have gotten a bad one for I had a bitter after-taste for some time. Strange to say I felt the same taste when we left the Stock Exchange and then again the Municipal Building."

Dick smiled, condescendingly. "Never mind, old man. I can readily understand that a city like New York would puzzle you after having spent all your life in the backwoods."

The taxi had started at high speed but had to stop soon at almost every corner. "And now we are going to one of the swellest places there is in New York and shall have some real lunch after all the army fare."

While riding in the taxi I naturally observed the buildings and the people on the street. I did admire the tall buildings and all but I felt strange. While watching the people it seemed to me they were all in a hurry, which was quite beyond me. On reaching the corner of what Dick told me was Broadway and Fourteenth street there was such a mixup of street cars, trucks, automobiles and pedestrians that I thought a collision of some sort was unavoidable. When we got headway on Broadway I could not help telling Dick that I was glad we were safely out of that muddle.

"What a mess," I said. "Every automobile seemed to try to get ahead of the other and the people acted likewise."

"Well, my boy, New York is a very busy place. There is not time for lingering. Everybody is looking out for himself."

I agreed with him. At Broadway and Thirty-fourth Street I witnessed another muddle like that on Fourteenth Street but when we finally got to Forty-second Street then I saw the worst. The traffic policeman on the corner seemed to do his level best to keep order but he might as well not have been there. I just simply marveled that we did not get smashed to pieces.

Dick's good humor seemed to rise with every turn of the taxi's wheels. Finally we stopped in front of a neat brick building in a narrow street.

"Here we are," Dick said, jumping out of the taxi. He paid the driver and we walked into a lobby. "This is the Biltmore, one of the swellest places in the world. Now you will see New York at its best. Come along."

We checked our hats and then proceeded through another lobby up into the main dining-room. The surroundings were more than luxurious. A very dignified looking gentleman in black ushered us to one of the tables. We sat down and another man, likewise in black, but considerably less dignified than the first one, came and busied himself around the table. Then came a third one who brought two large, sumptuous looking pasteboard folders. It was the bill of fare.

"Man, the sky is the limit. Remember you are my guest and the best is just good enough for Uncle Sam's fighters." While I was studying the bill of fare a fourth waiter came and brought ice water.

I thought the water must not be good or else they had too much of ice in New York, as the day was comfortably cool. But what did I know of city life?

While trying to wade through the bill of fare, I could not help recalling Dick's words of a little while ago that here I should find New York at its best. I always thought New York was the metropolis of America, and with my countryfied way of thinking, I naturally concluded that the metropolis of a country should be the mirror of the land. I did not like the many French, Italian and Spanish names on the bill of fare. Do not all the New Yorkers speak English? Well, pretty soon I found out that they did not, indeed. While our meal was in full course I watched people around me and was more than surprised to hear them talk in almost every language but English. This aroused in me some thoughts which interfered considerably with my enjoying the meal, which, owing to Dick's extravagance was very sumptuous. But Dick seemed to be in his element. I must say, the food was good and so was the music. The tunes came from a distance and Dick volunteered the information that the orchestra was hidden behind palms and shrubbery.

"Never mind," he remarked, sipping at his champagne, "shortly you shall hear some music more distinctly."

Sure enough after a little while the subdued music ceased and an orchestra struck up with full force. It seemed to me too noisy, but then I am not a music critic. No sooner had the loud music started than the diners started to rise and leave their tables. I followed them

with my glance and you can imagine my amazement upon noticing that the men and women were headed for a vacant space on the floor and in another minute they were dancing. First I was puzzled, then I just could not help laughing.

"Man, what struck you?" exclaimed Dick somewhat harshly. "Remember you are at the Biltmore and please, for my sake, do not attract undue attention."

I knew by this time that we could not attract much attention with our uniforms as plain soldiers. I have seen men in all sorts of uniforms scattered all over the place. Privates, Colonels, Generals, French and Italian officers. So he must have referred to my laugh.

"What struck me?" I asked in turn. "Well, Dick, I could not help laughing when I saw all these people get up from their tables and dance in the middle of the day." And I was almost disgusted, perhaps Dick noticed it. The music grew louder and louder and sounded less and less like music. It seemed to me I heard someone blowing on a comb covered with tissue paper. We used to make that kind of noise at Hopeview, years ago, but even with our uncultured minds we would never have dared call it music. And how they danced! They jumped around and wiggled and some of the dancers leaned very close together and most of them had flushed faces. Of course, I never heard of people dancing during their mid-day meal. I thought dancing was a diversion all by itself.

But then what do a country boy's thoughts amount to?

Dick must have guessed my thoughts and feelings, for

soon we left. He called for his check and I happened to see that he paid with a twenty-dollar bill. When the waiter returned with the change my host dismissed him with a nonchalant wave of his hand. For our hat checks Dick also paid with a bill of some sort. We left the Biltmore silently. Dick seemed to be displeased. I felt sorry for I thought I caused his displeasure.

"What's wrong, my friend?" I said.

"Wrong? There is nothing wrong with me, but if I am not mistaken, there is something vitally wrong with you."

"I do not quite get you, if you don't mind my saying so," I parried.

"Well," said Dick disgustedly, "here I bring you to this swell place and you show no signs of appreciation"—

"Pardon me," I interrupted, "you are mistaken there. I surely do appreciate your generosity, but if you refer to what we have just seen I must admit I do not appreciate it." I thought I would have my say while I had a chance. "When we entered that place you told me I should see New York at its best. And what did we see? A place bearing an atmosphere that is everything but American, filled with people who must dance while they are supposed to eat. And how they danced and to what music. Whew!"

For some time we walked along silently, I watching the crowd; Dick seemingly brooding over something.

"You must not mind my frankness, Man," Dick finally broke the silence, "but I think you are a bore. Or else your education has been somewhat neglected. You are

passing judgment over people and things you do not know the first thing about. One has to be a man bred in the city to understand these people."

"I grant you, Dick, that I do not understand the New Yorkers. But I guess I have my eyes open and can see for myself. And if I see apparently intelligent people dancing at noon time, it surely makes understanding them very difficult."

"Go on, we better drop the subject and let us take a good walk in Central Park."

I did not press the point as I did not like to argue, so we strolled along towards the park and talked about the weather and things, saying nothing in particular. Meanwhile I thought there must be something wrong somewhere, and it occurred to me that father once said there was something in the air and that people expected something to happen. Perhaps, I thought, these poor New Yorkers were restless and feeling the under-current of impending events, were forcibly leading their thoughts into channels of vague pleasure.

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I liked the park, but to tell the truth, it did not come up to my expectations. Altogether, I liked the park with its trees and baby carriages and people and I could not help thinking of Ann Mary. And thus I got restless and the fresh air and the foliage were restful and refreshing. People seemed more like themselves here. The autos, of course, were in as much of a hurry as downtown, but the pedestrians seemed rather more composed. As it was

early in the afternoon, I was somewhat surprised to see quite a number of able-bodied men strolling around or sitting on benches. They certainly did not look like gentlemen of leisure. Was there no work for them or did they not want to work?

A country boy's thoughts are sometimes bothersome and annoying, but what's the use of having brains if one cannot even think?

Dick did not seem to get over his moodiness and I did not wish to disturb him. After a while we sat down on one of the benches and talked about our impending trip abroad and got so interested that the harmony was soon re-established. Then we took a ride along Riverside Drive on a green auto bus. Of course we went up on top and Dick pointed out the most conspicuous residences. I had learned my lesson, so I did not blurt out my thoughts, but to be frank, many of the no doubt very expensive buildings impressed me as out of tune and grotesque.

But what do I know of modern architecture?

We went up to Grant's Tomb, which I liked very much. Here is something truly American, I thought, to myself, of course. Then we went back to Central Park and Dick showed me the Museum. My heart beat proudly. A very remarkable collection of the best masters, and antiques of apparently very high value made me feel good. Of course I did not say so to Dick or else he might have wondered how I came to know about things. Well, he did not know that some country boys do read and learn. After father left us Fr. John got interested

in me, and through his kindness I had an opportunity to read many a good book. Dick was a good sport, after all. He regained his gentlemanly composure and seemed to have forgotten all about my lack of what he called appreciation. Soon we were on Fifth Avenue.

"Look, there is one of the leading department stores of the country if not of the world." The building looked good enough and was very large, occupying an entire block all around. I asked Dick to go in which he gladly did.

"You better buy some souvenirs for the folks at home," he said. "Here you can get everything you could think of."

We walked through all the aisles of the ground floor and I was eagerly looking around for something appropriate to send home to Ann Mary, mother and the girls. There was a counter with handbags. Beaded work, clumsy, yet attractive. I picked up one and asked the price. "Thirty-five dollars." I dropped it before saying something that would have surely displeased my host. Dick bought himself a small pocket book of brown leather for which he paid eight dollars. I did not buy a thing. There was nothing that would have appealed to the plain, but as I thought, sane tastes of my folks. In passing out of the store my attention was attracted by one of the window displays. In the centre I noticed a bed-spread. It looked so nice and I thought how nice it would be for Ann Mary. So I induced Dick to go back and asked the price of that particular bedspread.

"That is a real bargain, sir," said the saleslady, who looked and was dressed up as if she owned the place. "This is imported from France and was especially made for us." She was kind enough to summon a boy, telling him to bring in the bedspread. It was beautiful. So dainty and fluffy and sweet.

"Only three hundred and fifty dollars," the saleslady explained cordially. I am so glad I did not let out what was on the tip of my tongue. Of course I did not buy it. In the first place, I did not own that much money. Then I did not think it was worth that much, so we left.

What an impertinence for a Hopeview boy to pretend any knowledge of values of finery. Mother had some laces and I remember Ann Mary's lace shawl, but these must have been of much inferior quality.

We turned the corner to Lexington Avenue which I rather liked. The houses seemed inviting and the street was comparatively quiet and the few pedestrians we met did not seem to be in such a hurry. We walked along a few blocks and lo and behold, there I saw the exact replica of the bedspread I had seen at that "wonderful" department store just a short while ago. There it lay nicely spread out over a brass bedstead in the window of a little shop. From the legend on the window I judged it was some sort of an art shop, apparently owned by a foreigner. I got interested.

"Dick, do you mind if I step in here for a minute?"

"No, indeed," he replied. "Somehow I like this place

myself," and so he came in with me. The first thing I inquired about was the bedspread. It was promptly shown me by an elderly, refined looking lady, who evidently did not speak our language for she called for some one. A bald-headed, gray-haired gentleman entered from the back of the shop and courteously explained that this spread was made on the premises, and in his broken English, seeing that I was a private, almost apologetically said that he thought the article was rather expensive.

"How much?" I asked.

"Seventy-five dollar," the shopkeeper said. "You see this expensive, hand work, much lace. Beautiful, eh?"

Of course it was beautiful, and when he saw I was not going to buy it, he seemed embarrassed.

"Too much, sir?" he asked.

I frankly told the shopkeeper it was more than I could spend and apologized for having troubled him. I think I must have gotten a breath of New York's air for I resorted to a fib.

"We have just seen a bedspread very similar to this up on Fifth Avenue, but we did not want to bother. When I noticed this one here I just could not resist."

"Si, si," the shopkeeper said complacently and I thought with some pride, "We make for those people work."

"Is that so?" I thought. Dick came to the rescue. He bought the bedspread and left orders to have it sent to his mother in Boston. I bought a cap for Ann Mary, some ribbons for sisters and an apron for mother.

In leaving the store I wondered what my dear folks

would think of my extravagance. My purchases amounted to nine dollars, but I liked the articles and felt that they would be more than welcome. I wondered also how it was that an article which you can get on Lexington Avenue for "seventy-five dollar" and which was made right here, should sell a few blocks further up on Fifth Avenue for three hundred and fifty dollars and as imported goods. But, then what did I know of business. People evidently want things imported. American-made products do not seem to be good enough for Americans. So they are told this and that is imported goods and why should the stores not charge exorbitant prices as long as people are fools enough to pay.

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"Let's take in the 'movies'," Dick said in leaving the little shop on Lexington Avenue. So we did. Half-dressed women, bandits, little children, wild animals whizzed before our eyes on the screen. Then came a conglomeration of nonsense that was called a comedy. If any one in Hopeview tried comedy such as we saw there, I am afraid our good-natured townfolk would have lost their temper. And how the people roared and applauded! The next number was a song. The words were reflected on the screen and a girl came out on the dark stage and sang. Her voice was sweet and clear and the song one mother would have liked. I enjoyed this number hugely and sent a kindly thought to the manager of the theatre, who evidently had some mercy left for his fellow beings. When the chorus was flashed on the

screen, the singer asked the audience to join in. There was hardly any response and the applause she got was very faint, indeed. Dick just took the show for granted and offered no comment. Why then should I disturb him? But somehow I felt that strange taste of the over-ripe olive I ate years ago at home.

To my great relief, Dick did not take me to any other place of amusement, at least not right away. Instead, we stopped in at one of the many clubs for soldiers, which are maintained by the War Camp Community Service for the benefit, housing and entertainment of soldiers going abroad as well as for those coming home. By a mere chance, we happened to pick out a soldiers' club that had been organized under the auspices of John M. Farley, the recently deceased Cardinal Archbishop of New York. And I must say I felt right at home here. The place was on one of the quiet streets within easy access to the railroad stations, as well as the various attractions, well appointed, with every possible comfort, but without extravagance. Any one in uniform was welcome and all his reasonable wishes were complied with. Bedrooms, baths, an excellent library, writing and smoking rooms and very good food made one feel more in a home than at a club. The prices were extremely reasonable, the club being maintained not for profit but for the accommodation of soldiers. If one has money, one is expected to pay, if not, one is welcome just the same. And if a soldier gets stranded he is being looked after as if he were a millionaire. Dick and I made the rounds of the

building and then spent a very pleasant hour in the adjoining writing and reading rooms respectively. I availed myself of the opportunity to write home, and in my letters to mother and Ann Mary told about the sights I had seen omitting remarks that might make them think New York was not all that it is cracked up to be. Why spoil other people's illusion, and why judge harshly?

"I suggested that we take supper right at the Farley Club to which Dick readily consented. We got acquainted with a number of officers, soldiers and marines and I felt very much like spending the rest of the evening at the club, but Dick told me he had secured seats to one of the theatres, so we left in time for the show. They played "East is West," a very pretty story of a little Chinese girl who falls in love with a European man traveling in China. There is much trouble, and the man's family object to his interest in the Chinese girl, but through the kindness of the clever playwright it leaks out just at the psychological moment that the supposed Chinese girl is the daughter of a Christian missionary, and so all ends well. I liked the play and the actors. They were fine. It was a wholesome, clean play, but I could not see for the life of me why they had to spoil it with a stupid scene in which a missionary tries to teach the heroine how to "shake the shimmy." Heaven knows I am a red-blooded man, but this silliness was more than I could stand so I remarked about it to Dick during the intermission.

"I told you already, Man, you do not understand the New Yorkers," he said.

"And I admitted before that I did not and also said that the New Yorkers make it hard for strangers to understand them. At the Biltmore they had to spoil their dinner with dancing at noon to some terrible music. And now they are spoiling this perfectly lovely play with that stupid shimmy business," I retorted.

"Well, Man, the shimmy is the rage now, and people are so highstrung and so restless that they just crave light amusement. If a producer wants his play to take he has to insert something that appeals to the less high instincts."

I did not continue the conversation, but was determined to ask Dick after the show about that shimmy. It seemed to me so stupid that I wanted to know all about it.

"Dick, what is the shimmy?" I asked my host on leaving the theatre.

"Man, I do not know what it is and no one else seems to know. It is the rage, that's all there is to it. I could talk my head off and could never explain it to you. But I am going to show it to you first hand."

And so he did. We crossed over to a perfectly respectable looking restaurant. It was called some sort of a palace and a nice bronze plaque near the entrance said: "French cuisine, Cabaret, Dancing." I thought I had gotten a little taste of the French cuisine and dancing, but I must admit I did not know the first thing about a cabaret, so my curiosity was somewhat aroused. Upon

entering the very large and very lavishly if garishly appointed dining room I did not notice anything particular about it. The empty, polished floor in the center I knew was for dancing. There was an orchestra of a dozen men in one corner of the dancing floor, and another one up on some sort of a balcony. The latter was supposed to furnish music for the diners, the one upon the floor for the dancers and for the cabaret. We occupied a table assigned to us and I was rather surprised to see so many men in uniform. Can they afford to pay the exorbitant prices charged in such places?

Most of them were privates, corporals and sergeants. But what is this of my business to ask such foolish questions?

I shall not dwell very long on my experiences in this place. I have seen the shimmy and have heard a Jazz band. And I had just enough. The thing was so unexpected that I really was more amazed than disgusted. A very good looking, young, well built woman appeared upon the dancing floor and danced around and around, making all sorts of gyrations. It was not any of the dances I knew of, yet it was good to look upon, as she performed very well. Then the dance grew wilder and wilder and finally she stopped in the center of the floor and began to shiver. That is, I thought she shivered and turned to Dick, asking him what was the matter with the girl.

"She is shaking the shimmy," with an understanding smile.

Well, I know now that if a woman, very scantily clad, tries to appeal to the lower instincts of man by revealing all of her charms then she is shaking the shimmy. And how the people yelled, and applauded and encored! Many of them were well advanced in years, old enough to be grandparents. The thing was so stupid that I laughed, since I was not supposed to swear out loud. We did not stay to the end of the show and on leaving I again felt that funny taste of an over-ripe olive.

Isn't it funny what strange notions a country boy will get? But since Dick himself admitted that the people were restless, I said to myself, they must be very restless, indeed, and in continuing my thoughts, I was wondering if too much of restlessness is not apt to lead to some sort of trouble.

I had my first ride on the subway. We went down to the station on Times Square and had a good half hour's walk in the labyrinth-like gangways until we found out we did not know where we were.

"Take the shuttle to Grand Central and then take the express to the ferry," said a guard with apparently unexhaustible patience. What a mess. "Follow the green line" and "Follow the black line" and a number of other instructions seemed enough to confuse even a born New Yorker.

I was told the New Yorkers were highly intelligent and efficient people, and could not quite grasp it how they could stand for such a nonsensical mess as this subway arrangement offers.

Finally we reached Grand Central Station and got out of the shuttle to board the express train. A train pulled in well filled. There were several dozen people standing at each door. When the train stopped at least three times as many people tried to jam into the cars as there was room. The particular car which we boarded was just jammed. We were pushed in edgewise. We were packed like sardines and it was plainly visible that there was no more room, yet, up to the minute the doors began to close, people tried to crowd in and were not a bit nice about it. When the train started I noticed a young lady, crowded in with us, her hat all askew, her clothes deranged from the crowding.

These poor New Yorkers must be very, very restless, indeed, I said to myself. And it seems there is not very much consideration abroad, either. Young or old, man or woman, you get pushed in the subway. No, I won't tell you that I again felt that funny taste of an over-ripe olive. Maybe my impressions are misleading me. Perhaps the New Yorkers, like people living in other cities, do not mean to be rude and they just cannot help being restless. Well, I was glad when I reached my bunk at Camp and there was no more sight seeing for me.

I thanked Dick for his hospitality and he regretted that I did not enjoy myself fully. I did not tell him that if I did not enjoy myself in the meaning of the word as used in common parlance, I learned a good deal, to which he would have said, no doubt, that one cannot learn much in one day. I think, however, I had enough.

The next morning I awoke with a mingled feeling of annoyance and amusement. In recalling the events of our sight seeing tour I felt almost sad. Then I made up my mind to forget it all and plunged full tilt into Camp life while awaiting marching orders. I went to New York quite frequently, always stopping at one of the soldiers' clubs and spending a few pleasant hours there. Then our orders came. The day before embarkation a letter came from mother. They had received my gifts and thanked me very profusely.

"I shall keep the pretty apron you sent me and wear it on the day of your return home. It is too fancy for me to wear around the house. Ann Mary sends you her best love. She needs considerable care these days and I am so glad I may call her my own. She is such a dear, bless her heart. Rosie is helping me a great deal, and Beth is doing Red Cross work. Miss Goodwin organized an auxiliary and we are all very busy.

"Of course, my boy, we are proud of you that you went forth with the others to do your duty by your country, but we do miss you and we wish it were all over with. But I must say one thing for the war; I really do not know the first thing about its real meaning, but it has brought us all mighty close together. As if an unseen voice were calling out to us, telling us ever and again 'You all belong to one family, be kind and loving to each other'."

"Do not worry about Ann Mary. She will write to you soon. Father's grave is nicely kept and I know you will think of him."

I kissed this letter over and over again wondering whether there would be any more letters for me from mother and Ann Mary.

## XI.

Mrs. Man had anxious days at Hopeview and the days extended into weeks and months. No news from her son and Ann Mary was ill. Not that she despaired. No. She knew the cause of her daughter-in-law's illness and trusted to God for a good outcome and she had no fears for her son, for she was a sensible American woman and a very brave mother. Her boy, she was satisfied, was in the care of Uncle Sam, in good hands, and should it fall to her lot to lose him on the field of honor she will have done only what thousands of other American mothers were doing and should her boy's supreme sacrifice be demanded to help humanity in its struggle for freedom she will bow her head in humble consent. Yet a mother's heart has the undisputed right to long for her loved ones and there were quite a few at Hopeview who shared her thoughts. Ann Mary was well established at the Man home and the girls as well as her mother together with Miss Goodwin helped Mrs. Man carry the burdens. Somehow, with all the bravery she could summon and in spite of it, the mother thought, some word should have come from her boy before this. Several months had passed since his last letter reached her, written the day before his embarkation. She thought she was entitled to know how her son was faring or what had happened to him. After the day's numerous tasks were over Mrs. Man sat at the window, the same where her son sat next to her on the floor not so very long ago and so many times as a little boy. Her thoughts were with the

American Expeditionary Forces and she fondled a bundle of letters in her lap. Two silent tears rolled down her cheeks and fell on her hand and then she stirred. She must not give way to fears and worries; she must be brave. Her daughter-in-law needs her, and, God willing, there will be soon another young life that shall need her loving care. All was quiet. Rosie and Beth were making bandages with Miss Goodwin in the adjoining room and Mrs. Wellman was on the second floor with her daughter. The setting sun cast a mystic light over the landscape, the reflection of which on the trees and flowers seemed like a very fine dew. She thought how beautiful and kind and thoughtful nature was. As if the last rays of the receding sun were telling her: "Never you fear. I am gone but for the night and shall be with you again on the morrow." And as if the reflections on the trees and flowers were whispering to her; "Mother of Man, we may look like tears, but we bring comfort and strength." Mrs. Man dried her tears and just got ready to read her boy's letters, one of her favorite pastimes, when the door opened quietly.

"Good evening, sister," greeted Mr. Wellman, placing his hat upon the table.

Mrs. Man, just a trifle startled, looked up. Something like mingled fear and joy passed over her kindly face, but just for the fraction of a second.

"God bless you, neighbor. You almost scared me." extending her hand by way of welcome.

"No need for fear, my dear woman, I have good news

for you," and then Wellman went on telling her how he had intended calling all day, but could not get away from the post office. "Just closed shop and my first thought was to see you. Our little post office is a very busy place these days, you know. Everybody is sending or expecting letters, not to mention the many packages and things."

He took up a chair and moving it close to Mrs. Man sat down.

"I am sure this will give you great joy. Came this morning. Read it for yourself," handing her a newspaper, nicely folded up so that an item marked with heavy pencil was on top.

Mrs. Man took the paper and it gripped Wellman's heart to see her frail hand shake. Not that he thought the mother was afraid. Yet it touched him to the core.

Mrs. Man held the paper for a while and pretended at reading. Finally she handed it back to Wellman.

"Will you please read it for me," with a voice that had just a scintilla of tremble in it.

Wellman took the paper, ready to read. Then at second thought he stopped short.

"Don't you think we had better call in the rest of the family?"

"Yes, neighbor, let us call them." Mrs. Man rose and called her daughters and Miss Goodwin. Then turning to them she said: "Mr. Wellman says he has good news from our soldier. Here it is," pointing at the paper in Wellman's hand. "But we must not be selfish. Let

us go up to Ann Mary and her mother. They are just as much entitled to hear as we are."

She led the way up stairs on tiptoe, the rest following in her wake. Upon reaching the second floor they found the door leading to Ann Mary's room ajar. The young woman slept quietly as if smiling, her mother's hand resting on her bosom. Mrs. Man opened the door more fully and quietly they entered. A sign to Mrs. Wellman told her not to move. Then she turned to Wellman, standing at the threshold, lamp in hand.

"You surely are thoughtful," Mrs. Man smiled at her neighbor, "and now proceed."

Wellman put the lamp on the small table next to the door and while holding one hand over the light so as to shield his sleeping daughter he read:

"Sergeant Man, U. S. A., of Hopeview, has been cited for exceptional bravery in action. Having been previously awarded the Croix de Guerre, his name had been sent to American Headquarters slating him for the Distinguished Service Cross."

That was all. Just a small item among the many military dispatches but, oh, how much it meant. Mrs. Man went to her daughters and holding them in her arms wept quietly. None was able to speak but they all felt so happy and thankful, for the news indicated that their soldier lived up to his father's name. Not that they doubted it for a minute that he would, yet the assurance of it filled their longing hearts to the brim. Of course they all asked themselves "Is he still alive?" but none dared utter it. Mrs. Man then approached the bed, bent

over Ann Mary and kissed her on the forehead. Then she turned to Mrs. Wellman, falling into her arms. The next minute she again regained her control. Ann Mary stirred, then opened her eyes and looked around wonderingly. The next minute she smiled. Then as if a shadow of anxiety was passing over her small face.

"Hush, my child," Mrs. Man assured her. "Your Man is a hero," stroking her face ever so tenderly. That was all. Ann Mary again closed her eyes and the rest left the room, leaving only Mrs. Wellman behind. On reaching the lower floor they all chatted for a while. Their voices might have been just a trifle pitched as if they were speaking behind tears, but withal they had themselves well in hand. Wellman left, Miss Goodwin and the girls resumed their work and Mrs. Man resumed her chair at the window, her boy's letters on her lap. Here they found her sound asleep and carried her gently to her bed.

"Beth, I think darling mother is happy," Rosie whispered to her sister. "See, she smiles, bless her heart."

The next day had still greater joy in store for Mrs. Man. Ann Mary gave birth to a sturdy little boy, a bouncing nine-pounder. He came in the wee small hours but the good women did not wish to disturb grandmother and thought to let her know only after all was over with. At about seven o'clock she came from her little bed-chamber, headed straight for the kitchen. There she found the table all set for breakfast, a big bunch of poppies in front of her plate. What does this mean? she

thought. The next minute she was headed for the stairs and Rosie fairly ran into her mother. She was upstairs and when they heard the mother stir she came to meet her.

"Good morning, mother dear. Ann Mary is asking for you."

Mrs. Man looked at her daughter. The happy countenance of the girl told her the story, and how she hurried up stairs.

Ann Mary was sleeping peacefully, alongside of her a little head was sticking out from underneath the cover. Mrs. Wellman came forward. "It's a boy," she whispered, upon which Mrs. Man went to the bed and knelt alongside of her grandson. A silent prayer was all she needed. On rising she led the way downstairs and they had a happy breakfast, indeed.

If Dick, Man's friend of the New York sight-seeing tour, could have witnessed what had transpired in this home these last twenty-four hours he would have been man enough to admit that these plain backwoods folk were gifted with an admirable amount of self-control, which could be rightly called courage.

Breakfast over every one took up the regular duties in the household. The only break in the routine was that Mrs. Man walked over to the post office to ask Mr. Wellman to communicate with Fr. John about the baptism of her grandson. How proudly she pronounced this word. And how pleased she was to learn that the neighbor-postmaster had already done so. On her way back

home she stopped at the little cemetery, placing one of the poppies that adorned the breakfast table upon her husband's grave. He surely got the message.

Two days later Fr. John came. The baptism of the littlest Man was an event at Hopeview. There were no festivities or any sort of celebration, but all the hearts of these good townsfolk united in joy and thanksgiving with the happy and proud grandmother. The only outward sign of jubilation was the wild flowers carried by every one of those who could attend the ceremony, which was held in the little church that once was Unk's front parlor. The boy was named after his father. After the priest and the crowd had left, Mr. Wellman joining them, Young Ben, who shut up his shop for the morning, put things aright in the little church. In leaving he gathered up all the flowers from the chairs where they were left and carried them to the cemetery. There he strewed the flowers upon Mr. Man's grave, lingering for a minute. Then he bethought himself and took a goodly handful of the flowers, putting them upon Unk's grave.

"What a nice speech he would have made were he to witness the services. Well his spirit was with us, anyway," he murmured to himself.

Fr. John was the honored guest of the Man household for an hour or so. They had a delightful visit, the priest and the two families. Some people called to stay but for a few minutes and Mrs. Man was promised by Fr. John to see that the hero-father should get the glad

tidings via the Red Cross. Beth sat wistfully through the visit, saying very little. When Fr. John rose ready to leave, she approached him.

"Father," holding out both her hands, "When you write to the Red Cross, please tell them that I wish to enlist as one of their nurses."

The good priest taken by surprise, looked first at the girl, then at Mrs. Man. He was not a man of many words but he felt it was his duty to make sure.

"Has Beth your consent, Mrs. Man?"

"Bless my soul, Father. She never told me about her intention to become a Red Cross nurse, but I rather anticipated this and I am so proud and happy," the mother said taking her younger daughter into her arms.

Fr. John took Rosie's hand. "And like a good girl you will stay with mother, I trust."

"Yes Father. I knew of Beth's secret desire and we had decided that she shall go and I will stay with mother. Beth thinks some one of the family should be with our soldier."

The priest smiled. "My dear child, have you any idea how utterly phantastic this plan of Beth's is?"

"Yes, Father. She may never find him. Yet, we decided that the very fact of her joining our fighting forces will make him feel happy, even if she should never find him, and should it be his destiny to give his life for the cause, he will surely know of Beth's sacrifice and bless her for it."

At this Beth disentangled herself from her mother's embrace and joined the priest and her sister.

"I am offering no sacrifice, Father. Indeed, I am just trying to do my duty as an American woman," she said decidedly. "If there is any sacrifice, I think it's Rosie who is offering it for it was she who first wanted to go. But then she thought she better stay with mother, being the eldest and having more experience around the house."

"Well, my children, I am satisfied, as long as your mother is not being left alone."

Mrs. Man stood near by watching this scene, worthy of the brush of a great master.

In parting Fr. John seemed deeply moved.

"The world need have no fears as long as true family spirit prevails among Americans."

The days and weeks and months dragged a little for Mrs. Man but not as much as had been the case recently. Of course, she missed her children, but her little grandson took up much of her time and she had delightful visits with the little fellow. She told him all about his grandfather, and his father and his aunt and Napoleon.

"Perhaps father and aunty are somewhere near where my cradle once stood, doing noble deeds for their country and humanity, and grandfather is watching them and God is protecting them. And when you grow up to be a man, you will remember them all, and aunt Rosie and grandmother and become a true American." At night Mrs. Man would awaken and listen.

"Your son is a little darling, and mother is so proud

of you and so happy," she heard Beth whisper as from far away.

"Yes, Beth, and we shall write her a nice long, newsy letter," her son answered. Then she went off into dream-land again. In the morning she always reassured herself that all was well with her dear ones. "We are in God's hands and he is good," she would whisper to herself.

Christmas came. This yuletide of 1918 was a busy and a happy one. The anxious and so much tried world knew by this time that armistice had been declared and Mr. Wellman had to enlist Rosie's help to take care of all the packages and letters that left Hopeview.

Young Ben had the little church all nicely fixed up for the holidays and on Christmas' eve Fr. Andrews came to give Hopeview the midnight mass. He arrived early in the evening and went straight to the Man home.

"Good evening Mrs. Man," he said happily, taking the frail woman to his heart. "May I buy my Christmas supper of you?"

"Buy it? Why Father, you can have all we have and welcome," she replied gayly. "By the way, what price would you offer?"

"This, my dear lady," the priest said triumphantly, reaching for his inner coat pocket and drawing forth an envelope.

"Its from my children," Mrs. Man exclaimed and fairly tore the letter from the priest's hand.

"I will say you guessed right, Mrs. Man. Fr. John

got it this morning. He is not feeling well and so it looked as though Hopeview would have to go without the usual midnight mass, but when this letter came Fr. John forthwith made arrangements to obtain assistance and sent me here." Then he took Mrs. Man's arm. "Steady now, dear woman."

"Never you mind me, dear Father. I know it's good news," she replied. And she started for Ann Mary's room, asking the priest to send up Miss Goodwin and to send for Rosie. No sooner said than Rosie appeared in the door.

"Here I am, mother dear. Fr. Andrews stopped at the post office and told me to come right home."

Mrs. Man gave the letter to Ann Mary, taking her grandson in her arms. The young mother unfolded the letter but her tears blurred her eyes. "I can't, mother."

Rosie took the letter and read it.

"A.E.F. Base Hospital,

Argonne Section, November 12, 1919.

"Mother of mine:—

"It is a long time since I last wrote to you and I was afraid you might get anxious.

"Well, it's over with, thank God. And soon I shall be with you again. I shall not tell you much about this war. I have been over the top near the Argonne Forest and I thought of you when I got near your home. I suppose you know I have won the Distinguished Service Cross and the French War Cross and I imagine the folks at home are all proud of that.

Well, mother dear, I am not. In the first place I

do not think any man has the right to be proud for having done his duty. In the second place it was all too dreadful to be proud of.

"Remember, mother of mine, when Unk got us those olives many years ago? I got a bad one and somehow time and again I get the same taste.

"I know all about you and Ann Mary and my little son, and how Rosie stood by you and how good they all were to you. And when a French general bestowed the War Cross upon me, and then later on when my commanding officer pinned the cross on my coat, you know what I thought of? I recalled father's words and did not push out my chest, but stayed humble. The honors I have won cost the lives of sons of other mothers; I felt sad.

"Let us hope all this horror is really at an end. My Lieutenant, a rich man's son from Boston, whom I called just Dick, and who was very good to me, told me shortly after the armistice was declared, that he thought it was not all over yet. To his way of thinking there were many problems to settle before the world returns to normal conditions. He foresaw all sorts of serious complications. He was brought here with me and died a few days ago from a wound he got in his head. His last words were; "Man, when you get home look up my mother and tell her if I had lived I would have been a real man".

"And a wounded Frenchman, who is occupying the cot next to me always repeats, that if we had not stepped in, Europe would have gone to pieces but adds, that we do not realize what a tremendous task we have undertaken.

"I guess our men at Washington and the folks at home will join hands and set everything aright for once more.

"I expect to be discharged from the hospital in a week or so. Got a wound in my left hip. It was not so bad. And my nurse helped a lot. She is a peach. But Ann Mary need not get jealous.

"A merry Christmas to all of you, mother dear, and now look who's here".

"Your loving son,  
Sergeant Man.

P.S.

"Dearest Mother :—

"The sergeant is not quit able to write for himself so I did him the favor of writing this letter.

"It seems like a miracle, yet it is true. Two weeks ago a large assignment of wounded soldiers was brought in from another hospital. It was two o'clock in the morning and I had not had a wink of sleep in two days, but one gets used to hardship here.

"My ward was filled to capacity. The head nurse made the rounds and ordered me to squeeze in two more cots in a hurry. I had my troubles in obeying her orders, but finally I managed, and no sooner did I report to the head nurse when the stretcher bearers brought two soldiers. They were all covered with mud. One of them had his head all bandaged up, while the other one showed no outward signs of a wound. I set to my task and soon had them all cleaned up. According to instructions, I took the belongings from their pockets, heaping them in two separate piles between the two cots. I had no time to look at them, besides, they both had a very heavy crop of beards, so I could not recognize them. New wounded came, I had to hurry and tied up the belongings of my two charges, numbered them, ran over to the clerk, handed him the bundles and looked

after other patients. In about an hours time I returned to the two soldiers. In the mean time, of course, they had been shaved. Upon reaching the first of the new cots I nearly dropped dead. You know why.

"Too bad Lieutenant Dick had to die. He was such a fine fellow. Refined and intelligent.

"Well, here we are, mother darling, safe and sound, counting the days when we shall be able to take you to our hearts.

"No, don't let us talk war. Let us be thankful it's over with.

"Kiss the little Man for us, and his mother, and Rosie and tell her she missed being blown to pieces just by a few inches.

"We shall let you know when we sail for home. It may take some time, as the transportation facilities are very complicated and it might happen that I will have to stay for a while. You see, the fighters are not needed any more, but the nurses have their hands full. So do not get worried if I should come later.

"Best love to all.

"Your devoted daughter,  
"Beth, R. C. N."

14

It took much longer for me to recover than I had expected.

"Sergeant Man you are discharged from the hospital," said the commanding surgeon of the hospital one nice morning of February, 1919. This news was welcome to be sure, but my joy was marred substantially by

the fact that I could not take Beth along with me. Sister had been transferred to another hospital some two weeks previous and I felt rather cheap at the thought of going home with her working so hard. She was such a dear, too. Nothing too much for sister, bless her soul. And how they all liked her, patients, nurses, doctors, and all. But orders are orders, so I determined to make the best of the situation. So I limped to the office for further instructions. I shall have to limp for the rest of my life, as my hip-wound proved to be more complicated than I thought.

Yet I thought, it is better to limp homewards in one direction than to fly heavenwards in several directions.

At the office I was handed my belongings, just as Beth had turned them in when I was brought here. All neatly bundled up. There I found my two war decorations, a picture of Ann Mary and one of mother's letters. Oh, how I loved them and how much these things meant to me now. I felt so lonesome. If I had Dick, at least. But there was not much time to be lost, so I reported for transportation and waited for orders. It took a full week before I was embarked, in the meantime I wrote letters and was anxiously waiting for word from home. It was now two months since I had a letter from Ann Mary telling me that all was well except that mother was not quite as alert as she used to be. The thought of not seeing her again caused me such sharp pain that I promptly dismissed it. No such thing as mother not waiting for me.

All the horrors of war did not come as hard as having to embark without a letter from mother. Our big transport hove anchor and we reached Hoboken after an uneventful and not even very interesting trip. There were so many soldiers, maimed for life, that the sight of them made your heart sore. These were the real heroes, by heaven! How hopeful they were and never a word of complaint. As I said, I stood the war pretty well, but this trip unnerved me. I felt fairly well, was dispatched to one of the debarkation hospitals in New York, where I was to wait for orders to go to Camp, whence I should be discharged. We were well taken care of, but how the days dragged! Those able to walk were allowed to go in pairs, and I had to make new acquaintances to get a partner. A young boy from Virginia, with his left arm gone became very much attached to me. He was a fine chap and during our frequent visits I noticed that he tried to be cheerful but could not quite manage it. I was several years his senior, besides my affliction was by far lighter than his, so I took it upon myself to take him under my wing, so to speak. I arranged to go out with him the next day, and we had a nice walk and had a good chat. I thought of Dick, poor fellow, and took my friend to the Farley Club for dinner. The same dear place, but somehow I felt sad at the thought of the many boys who should never again see this place. Well, for their sake, I hoped that the supreme sacrifice they so willingly brought will help them in the great beyond. The meal over, I took the young Virginian to the same movie theatre which

I had visited with Dick. The same blue murders and nonsense and all, the same crowd cheering and clapping and worst of all, the same girl came out to sing. Her part was the best of the show but it hurt me to see how little appreciation she got. She sang "Mother Machree" and her words went right through my heart. And the young Virginian sobbed quietly at my side. Oh, how it all hurt. He told me afterward that both his mother and sweetheart had died while he was away and, of course, I did not bother him by offering commonplace words of sympathy. I took his hand, and he stopped sobbing. He understood. Had he been in a better mood, I should have tried to take him to the places that Dick had taken me to. I was anxious to know what effect this great strife had on New Yorkers. Under the circumstances this would have been a sacrilege. So I took my young friend right back to the debarkation hospital, where we had a nice talk and I was so glad to see that he seemed somewhat cheered.

The day following we were to go out again to witness the parade of one of our returning victorious divisions. We started out early in the morning and got two seats for the grand stand on Fifth Avenue. The W. C. C. S. was still on the job, and when the kindly lady in the little hut on Greeley Square handed us the tickets she told us to hurry up or else we might not be able to get to our seats. The parade was to start on Washington Square at nine o'clock in the morning. I looked at my wrist watch. Eight five. Why, it will take the parade a good hour before they reach Fifth

Avenue and the Public Library, so we started leisurely towards the Avenue. Soon I felt disappointed. We had little difficulty in getting to the corner of Thirty-fourth Street and Broadway, but then the fun began. At least I thought some people regarded it as funny. What a throng, and how they pushed, and jostled and crowded. I thought we had better play safe so I suggested that we walk back to Broadway and walk up to Forty-second Street. We took it for granted that my young friend's missing arm and my limping would help us. No such thing. We reached Forty-second Street all right but when we turned around the corner we got stuck once more. Old women, young girls, children were pushed and crowded. No consideration, no respect. What a mad crowd, I thought. I wondered if these people were still as restless as Dick told me they were and whether they still danced at midday and shook the shimmy. I looked around for the young Virginian. The crowd had carried him along. I called for him. Some rogue laughed at my effort. Then as if a mighty hand had pushed the surging crowd. I felt a sharp pain in my wounded hip.

"Hold on. Stop for a minute, will you?" An elderly gentleman, himself all disheveled, waved his hand and yelled at the top of his voice. He yelled and gesticulated until he attracted some attention. "A soldier has fainted. Stop, make way, you brutes!" After one moment's silence the pushing stopped. Then an officer came, waving his stick over his head.

"What's up here?"

"A soldier dropped," the elderly man shouted out of breath.

"Stand still all of you," the officer commanded. The crowd obeyed. Three or four men helped him make way and they picked up the fainted body of a man in uniform, badly treated by the crowd.

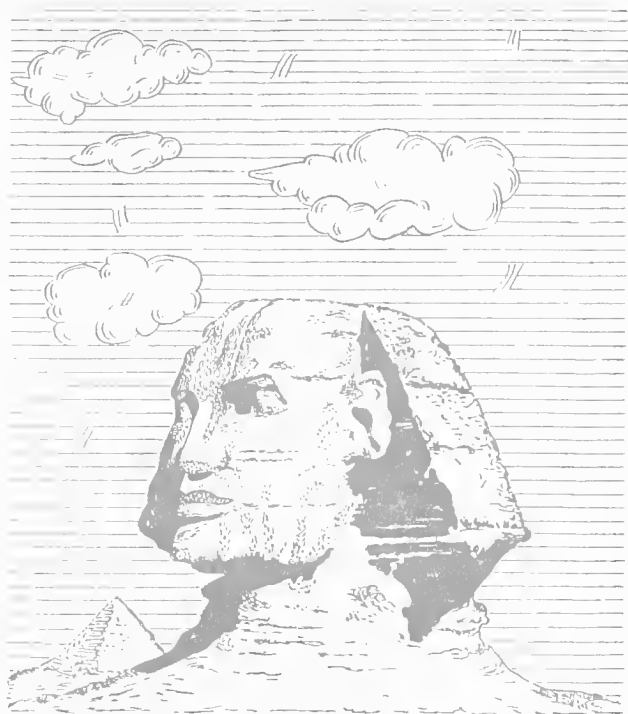
The officer was puzzled at first, "Don't meditate," some one yelled. "Take him away." Then it occurred to the officer to look at the soldier's identification badge.

"Sergeant Man," he murmured.

After a little while an ambulance drove up to the debarkation hospital No. 7 and the limp body of a soldier was taken up stairs. The nurse in charge sent for the surgeon, who in turn made a hurried examination.

"The poor fellow had been badly treated, but nothing serious. Just a fainting spell. Put him to bed quick." After having given his instructions the surgeon went along to attend to his numerous duties.







## THE VISION



T was a beautiful Spring day, in the early hours of the afternoon, as I was sitting on the roof in a reclining chair, gazing around me and breathing in the fragrant ozone.

Above me the clear, blue sky, below me a well laid-out street with people walking to and fro and vehicles and the nice trees edging the sidewalks broke the monotony pleasantly. I was absorbed in thoughts, my mind wandering here and there, in my heart a strange desire, a yearning for something I was unable to define. Withal I felt as one feels when recovering from a long protracted illness. Of late I was much troubled with this vague feeling. Was I alive? Where am I and how did I get here? As I was basking in the sun the tenseness of my nerves relaxed, my subconscious restlessness gave way to a feeling of pleasant fatigue and I drifted away into slumberland. I must have had a good nap as the sun had traveled a good way on the horizon when I awoke, I prepared to rise from my seat when I felt a hand resting gently upon my shoulder.

"You are wanted at the office, sir," a gentle voice whispered. I looked up, to meet the kindly look of a nurse.

"Thank you, sister. I am coming presently," I replied rising. I had some difficulties in so doing and at first was wondering about it.

"Your cane, sir," the nurse, reminding me of my need of it. I took the cane and limped towards the hallway. While on my way to the office it seemed so strange to me why I should be limping. Unconsciously looking behind me I noticed the good nurse, following me at some distance. The good soul was not quite sure of me. I stopped, the nurse approached.

"Pardon, sir, the seeming intrusion. I did not want to take any chances, so I kept at close range."

"Do I really need to be watched?" I asked somewhat impatiently. The nurse looked slightly embarrassed.

"You are quite yourself, again sir," she replied after some hesitation. "But as you have been in my charge for some time I felt it my duty to be near you in case of any emergency."

"You say I have been your charge. You are a nurse?"

"Yes, sir."

"Have I been ill, then?"

"Yes sir. You have been very ill, but thanks to your sturdy constitution you overcame all the complications of your illness and are discharged."

"Discharged from where?"

"From the National Memorial Hospital."

"Hospital? I must have been quite ill, then?"

"Quite so, sir."

"And you have had charge of me during my illness?"

"Only during the last period of it."

"Oh thank you, sister," reaching for the nurse's hand. We shook hands. "I hope I did not give you much trouble?"

"Not more than could be expected in a case like yours." Everything seemed hazy and cloudy and I had to hold on to my cane. The next minute the nurse was at my side, guiding me ever so gently.

"Be calm, sir. You must not faint again. Take yourself in hand and live up to your name." I thought there was just a faint shadow of reproach in that sweet voice.

We walked down two flights of stairs and stopped in front of a high door, which, on a neat brass tablet bore the legend:

"Dr. Patience, Surgeon-in-chief."

The nurse opened the door, leading me. We entered into a spacious, neatly appointed room, with a row of chairs alongside the walls. The nurse bade me sit down, and disappeared through another door to the left. After a short while, the door opened and the nurse bade me to enter. On the threshold she took my hand.

"Good luck to you this time, sir." The next minute she vanished.

Upon entering the room I found myself in front of a large desk. A professional looking gentleman in white duck was busy arranging some papers. Then he looked up.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Man," he said with a firm yet tender voice, "Be seated, please."

I followed instructions. While doing so, I watched the man's face. His eyes were clear and dark brown. A straight nose sat well between the two wings of a short mustache. The mouth was what you would call that of a good man, the cheeks ruddy, showing some wrinkles, which, however, did not become him ill. His hair was slightly gray at the temples and in watching the general expression of the face more closely it seemed as if I had seen him before, a long time, perhaps ages ago. And he called me such a strange name. Involuntarily, perhaps by sheer force of habit I looked for the nurse, for I again felt faint.

"The nurse has left you and you shall have to shift for yourself from now on," the man broke the silence. I listened and looked at him as if awaking from a deep slumber.

"Yes, Mr. Man, you are well enough to take care of yourself," the man continued. "I sent for you in order to tell you this. Here are your papers and valuables and some letters. Take good care of them"—

I rose to interrupt him, but he waved his hands, bidding me to keep my seat.

"Calm yourself, Mr. Man. I know you feel strange. This is quite natural after an illness like yours. Please calm yourself, sir," he added urgently, evidently noticing the painful surprise in my face, "You must be strong and face the situation as your name would indicate. You

are quite well now. You fought bravely and even though your case was a critical, almost a desperate one, your constitution helped us a great deal. Please take your belongings and sign this receipt."

At this I arose, approaching the desk mechanically. The doctor gave me a pen and pushed a narrow slip of paper before me. I took the pen with some hesitation.

"What shall I sign?" I asked embarrassed.

"Your name, of course".

My name. What was my name? I asked myself. The doctor must have been a good mind reader, for promptly he dictated:

"Capital 'M', 'r' and 'period'. No, Capital 'M', 'a', 'n' and 'period' ". Then he took the pen, blotted my writing, pigeonholed the receipt, and handed me a small package and a bundle of letters.

"And now, Mr. Man go and take good care of yourself. And thank you for having helped us pull you through", the doctor said offering his hand.

I took his hand and pressed it.

"What are you thanking me for?", I could not help asking.

"In case of serious illness", the doctor said, leaving my hand go, "Three things are most essential; trust in God, good attendance and responsiveness on the part of the patience. The first you had from the start. We did for you all we could and you helped us in doing so by responding to our instructions".

"Then, in reality it is I who should thank you". I averred confusedly.

"It is kind of you to feel that way but we never expect thanks", the doctor parried.

"Thank you so much, doctor", I said deeply moved.

"Welcome, I am sure", was the simple reply. "And don't leave your cane behind. You better hold on to it for some time yet".

I took my cane, the package and letters and started for the door. Then it occurred to me to stop.

"Doctor", I said, making one step toward his desk, "may I trouble you with a question?"

"No trouble, I assure you, what is it, Mr. Man?"

"Would you mind telling me who it was that led me here?"

"Your nurse".

"My nurse"?

"Yes, Mr. Man. She had charge of you for several years and I must say you were most fortunate in having been assigned to her care. She is the best of her profession". The doctor was ready to assume his work at the desk. "Well, my friend?", he queried in looking up.

"Please, what is her name? I should like so much to thank her".

"You need not bother yourself. I am sure she received all the thanks she ever expected to get by the fact of your recovery. We are working silently but diligently. Thanks, reward and recognition never enter our minds. We even do not care to be known. But since your case was such an exceptional one I shall make an exception and tell you her name" . . . .

"Yes"? I interrupted eagerly.

"Charity", the doctor simply answered. "And good good luck to you, Mr. Man".

I was dismissed. In reaching the wide corridor I stopped for an instant, looking at the neat brass tablet. "Doctor Patience and Sister Charity", I repeated to myself wonderingly.

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Still somewhat dazed I walked along the corridor. After a little while I noticed a grilled door, in front of an open shaft. To the left a sign read;

"Those without affliction will  
please use the stairs."

Was I afflicted? And what did all this mean? At any rate I took to the stairs, looking around me and noticed how neat and comfortable the appointments were. I also noticed the entire absence of extravagance. I no sooner reached the main lobby on the ground floor than I was approached by a uniformed man coming from the porter's lodge.

"Gentleman to see you sir", he said deferentially.

"Where"? I asked mechanically. Instead of an answer the porter pointed at a door across the lobby. Just when I was reaching for the door the knob gave way. As if drawn by an unseen hand I entered the room.

"Here you are at last", a gentle voice greeted me, a firm grip taking hold of both my hands. "You kept me waiting a long while friend Man, but it was worth it all", the stranger said warmly. Noticing my discomfort,

he discontinued. "Never you fear. Come, take a seat and let us get acquainted," leading me to a comfortable arm chair. "There", the stranger continued. "Make yourself at home and after some brief introduction I shall presently take you away from here". While speaking the stranger looked at me as I thought only a mother could look on finding her long lost child.

"You guessed it", the stranger said uncannily. "Yes, friend Man, there were times, when I feared I should lose you. But you survived and you shall enjoy good health from now on".

I could not describe what I felt, I think it was a mixture of awe, relief and perhaps fear too. He was clean shaven and looked though he never had a growth of hair on his face. His dark eyes looked at me reassuringly and the kindly smile playing around his even mouth seemed to contrast with the seriousness of the general expression of his face. He was dressed in a dark grey suit. The cut was good, the material seemed the best. His collar was just the right height and a neat black silk tie completed the altogether pleasing picture. There was something dignified about him and upon noticing a peculiar hat upon the table I was wondering who he might be. I never had seen a hat like this. It was a peculiar silk hat of black material, with a narrow band and a comfortable wide brim. I noticed one brown glove alongside of the hat, thereupon finding that he wore the left hand glove. The free hand was that of a man. Clean, strong, well kept but not 'manicured'.

I felt subconsciously that while I was observing him he followed me with his eyes. In looking up I met his eyes. What wonderful eyes, I thought. They seemed to speak.

"You are at a loss to place me", he finally broke the silence. "This is a rather common occurrence to me. Most people pass me by not noticing me. Yet, I am always on the alert. I let no one snub me, nor coddle me. I manage to keep an even temper and when hurt am never aroused to anger. I hail from a very good family, if I may say so."

How strange, I thought. This man certainly does not seem to be conceited. Yet, how he talks.

"Again you guessed right, friend Man", the stranger went on. "I am not conceited. Heaven forbid! I could ill afford such a weakness and besides my family would not stand for any nonsense".

I seemed to lose my patience, or get anxious or something, so I blurted out; "For God's sake, who are you?"

"Steady, friend Man. Do not get excited. You cannot afford it. You have been discharged as recovered but you still need your self-control and shall always need it."

"Yes, but who are you?" I retorted. "You are speaking so strangely and act rather familiar, referring to your family and all that sort of thing. Please get me out of this confusion."

"I am sorry to hear you say that you are confused. Most people are confused upon meeting me. Many never meet me, playing the foolish game of an ostrich.

Many there are who spend most of their time in trying to avoid me, yet I never lose track of any one and the sooner we meet the better. I admit my appearance might seem strange. Yet, if you will look closer, you will admit that there is nothing strange about me. My face is clear and not a bit repulsive. You see I dress well, if quietly, and I think you have observed that my manners are not bad. Of course all this is largely accounted for by my descentance," in noticing my surprise, he waved his hand patiently, "as I am of the best parentage".

"Yes, yes, but who are you?" I interrupted.

The stranger continued without having noticed my interruption. "You think I am a stranger. Most people do. As for you, I am rather surprised that you should not feel as though you had known me. For many years you have been in the closest touch with my relatives. My father watched out for you, my mother kept up your courage, my sisters in turn nursed you and my brother was your doctor."

I looked at him in amazement.

"Yes, friend Man, it was indeed my father, Faith, who watched upon you, and my mother, Love, did not let you lose courage, and Dr. Patience, my brother, ministered unto you assisted by one of my sisters, whose name is Charity. It may seem strange that my sisters,—and I have many,—should all bear the same name; but as they pursue the same profession, that of helping others, all display the same zeal and ardor in doing what they consider their duty, the name is really immaterial."

"But who are you?", I again blurted out.

"I am the best friend you ever had," he answered solemnly. I stood at your cradle when you were born and followed you step by step. Luckily, your home surroundings were rather congenial, yet I should have followed you, at any rate. Many times you tried to dodge me, even though I think you very seldom realized my nearness. I knew every one of your thoughts and never lost patience with you, for I knew your inborn qualities were good and that you would come out on top. You were trying though, at times, and had it not been for a certain tie that bound us together, who knows but that I had given you up."

"But your name, please", I said with apparent anxiety.

"We shall come to it presently," the stranger said calmly. "I said I had been at your side constantly. Well, there was a time when I felt inclined to leave you. You got yourself into a dreadful mess and muddle. I warned you, but you did not seem to heed me. From what I have seen you do I thought you had gone mad. Then my father, Faith, called us all into council and after what he told us about you and your kind we decided to be after you more ardently than ever. So I followed your trail over ruins, and corpses, and broken baby carriages, amidst a roar and thunder of cannon and bursting shells, with pestilence hovering all around, until they brought you here. To be correct you were brought first to another hospital, where you stayed for a short while, thence you were transferred in turn to three or four

places, spending everywhere a few years until they finally brought you here, whence you are discharged now”.

The stranger reached for his right hand glove on the table, putting it on slowly. While I was watching him as if in a trance, he again spoke.

“I was watching for you patiently wherever they took you and I managed to communicate with you through my relatives in a way rather unnoticed by you. You had several very serious relapses, but we firmly resolved not to let you go under, and now here you are yourself again. In fact in better trim than you ever were and your full recovery is all the reward we ever wished for”.

“And your name?” I again asked.

“My name is as clean as my face, as neat as my dress and as modest as nature in its Sunday best; Truth!”

I rose from my chair and barely realizing what I was about to do, I approached him and the next moment I was kneeling before him, covering my face, trying to hide my tears caused by a great emotion.

“Friend Man, rise”, he said kindly, helping me to my feet. “No one shall kneel before me nor before any of our tribe. You may bow to my father, you may kiss my mother’s hand, and you may kiss my sister and take my brothers hand. And as for me, you may love me as if I were your brother, which I truly always meant to be, but we need no demonstration of a servile attitude. We expect you to keep your self-respect. You must live up to your name, the greatest on earth”, he continued,

handing me my cane. "Oh, what a fine name is yours; 'Man'. You see we are but your servants. We have been sent to help you find yourself and all we expect of you is sincerity. Traitors we dislike. Very much so, indeed. But even traitors we do not forsake. We are ready to stand even by them to the very last. If, in spite of all our efforts, they throw us over, well, then, sadly we step aside, leaving them to their deserts."

I lifted my face to Truth. Our eyes met and I felt as if a heavy, thick veil had been lifted from my mind.

"And now come, friend Man. I have not been waiting for you in vain all these years, I have found you at last, and now I shall take care of you. You, in turn, trust me and your confidence shall be amply rewarded". At this he took my arm and led me out gently, yet firmly. On nearing the porter's lodge, the uniformed servant came forward, deferentially.

"I am so glad you are well again, Mr. Man", with a smile of content. Then to my friend;" and I know you will take good care of him, Truth".

"I sincerely hope friend Man will let me do so". — "Caution, the porter, is a faithful servant," he said turning to me.

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It was not before the following morning that I awoke fully from what I thought was a trance. I found myself in a bedchamber with every reasonable comfort, but no trace of luxury. A substantial walnut bed, two chairs to match, a neat washstand and a mirror completed the

furnishings of the room. The window was hung with chintz and in making the rounds I noticed a picture above the bed. At first glance, I could not quite make it out. But, the longer I looked upon it the more thrilled I felt. While dressing I returned again and again to look at the picture and when fully dressed I stood in front of it. While gazing at the picture with fascination, I heard some one rap on the door.

"Come in", I said surprisedly.

In turning around I saw friend Truth in the door.

"Good morning, friend Man", reaching for my hand, "I hope you rested well".

"Good morning, Truth", I answered, somehow unable to say more.

"Ah, I see this picture attracted your attention", Truth ventured, trying to help me overcome my uneasiness. "This is but a reproduction. You shall see the original shortly. And now come. You shall have breakfast with us. You are to meet the entire family."

"You are most kind to me", I offered, meekly, "without even knowing me".

"How mistaken you are my friend. I and the rest of our family know you better than you ever knew yourself. We know your good qualities and we know your failings and for all that we love you. And because we love you we are trying very hard to help you. And, by the way, I must ask you to be yourself, when and while with us. There are two things we have absolutely no use for; sham and pretence. These two ugly and foolish

fellows are hanging around our house constantly, but we never let them enter. So be just yourself. Besides, it would not help you any if you tried to sympathize with those two impostors, for we know you just as you are. In fact we know every one of your thoughts. And do not try to flatter us. Flattery is another one we have no use for. Our houseman, Fidelity, is a watchful fellow, having his hands full with keeping those pests from our door, and our cook, Honesty, sees to it that Envy, Greed and Hatred do not get too near, while our maid, Modesty, keeps the premises clean. So you see you are in good hands and you need no other introduction than yourself with the sincere desire to make yourself at home”.

The breakfast was a most delightful affair. Truth's relatives were kindness personified, but there was nothing haughty about them. By way of comparing them to myself I thought they surely were too good for me. No condescension, no airs. Nothing but real kindness. The breakfast over, Truth took me to the kitchen where I met the help and found them to be in keeping with the family. I felt as if I were walking on silvery clouds, with the stars twinkling all around me, butterflies and birds racing in the air and angels singing. I had a goodly taste of heaven.

Truth again took my arm and I again felt that firm yet tender grip, so invigorating.

“And now I shall show you the sights”, he said, going for my hat and cane.

Where have I heard these words before.

In leaving the house I noticed that Truth was without his gloves.

"Thanks for your thoughtfulness", he replied. "When out in the open I seldom wear gloves, I have them in my pocket, though, ready to use them wherever the occasion demands it".

"How strangely you speak", I remarked.

"I use the gift of talk to express my thoughts", he replied gently. "I admit, my thoughts might seem strange and out of tune at times, yet I never depart from this habit. I have found I can be of good service only in saying just what I feel and think. Whenever I made concessions along this line, I always felt sorry afterward. You see, you cannot play a double handed game and win. At least not honestly".

"And what about your gloves?", I queried.

"Of necessity I come into contact with all sorts of people, for I am everywhere. Some people like the firm grip of my hand. Others again resent the lack of manicure. As I am desirous to serve every one, I am willing to meet them half way. In fact, in many instances I have won the confidence of people through trifling courtesies such as meeting them with my gloves on or with bare hands as I thought the occasion demanded it".

I thought how patient my friend was. How nicely he answers all of my questions that must seem to him so foolish.

"This time you guessed wrong", he interrupted my

thoughts. "I cannot lose my patience. The minute I would do so I should lose my power. This, of course, does not mean that I am foolish in my patience. Pretty soon I find out whom I am dealing with and gauge myself accordingly. I will try and try again and the keener the disappointments, the more eager I am to obtain a hearing. And if all my efforts fail, I am not to blame. This may sound rather selfsatisfied, yet it is so. And as to your asking questions, why the more questions you ask, the better I like it, always supposing, that the questions are not prompted by sheer curiosity and that the answers are being listened to".

By this time we found ourselves on a wide thoroughfare. Truth stopped, waiving his hand up and down the street.

"This is Fifth Avenue", he explained. "Of course, I presume you know we are in New York", he added.

I could not speak. I tried to think and it seemed to me as if I were walking upon known ground. Truth again guessed my thought.

"You have been here before, have you not?", he asked casually.

"I think so", I replied uncertainly.

"Don't say that", he replied.

"Don't say what?", I asked.

"I do not want you to say 'I think so' instead of 'yes' or 'no'. You must acquire the habit of using your brains and not to be afraid to do so". At this he evidently noticed that his words made me feel uncomfortable.

"No harm meant friend Man. The time for wavering and faltering is over for you. You have recovered from a very critical illness. You were lost in a horrible maze and muddle and now you have found yourself. Hold on to yourself, for should we again lose sight of you it will be so much harder to bring you back".

"But I really am not quite certain whether I have been here before", I remarked.

"Of course you have", Truth replied. "Don't you remember your friend Dick"?

Dick! Again and again I asked myself where have I heard this name.

"Take your time friend Man", Truth reassured me, "Just make up your mind that you will use your brains and you will be all right presently".

And while walking alongside of him, memories of years long past came back to me. First the sight seeing tour with Dick. Then Hopeview, Ann Mary, a sweet little nurse, and from the distance I heard the cooing of a baby and then I saw a simple grave covered with flowers and back I was from whence I must have started. I felt a chill go through me, then I felt as if a gentle hand had smoothed first my face, then my whole being. I felt I had regained the full possession of my senses. Oh, what a wonderful feeling! Like a bird freed from its cage, like a blind man who has regained his sight.

"How long have I been away?", I asked my friend.

"You have not been away at all", Truth answered. It

felt so good to hear his even, clear voice. "You just had gone through a terrific crisis and we saved you by the skin of your teeth, so to speak. You have found yourself and we intend that you should never lose hold of yourself again." Then he added. "It was just forty years ago when you first came here with Dick".

"Forty years?"

"Just so. And you will find a New York quite different from what you have seen. For that matter, you will find a world entirely changed, remodeled, if I may say so. For this reason I do not expect you to recognize either New York in particular, or the world in general. But you shall love them all. You see, the whole world shared with you all the trials of a terrible mess you have gotten yourself into, You have lost yourself and drifted. Just so. And the world seemed to get to pieces."

"And now all is well?" I queried anxiously.

"Almost". Truth explained. "The world has learned a lesson and paid for it dearly. And now your tribe is on the point of attending to real business."

"By which you mean?", I interrogated.

"By which I mean that the human race had come to its senses once more, and indications tell me it is going to stay in its senses. At least for many years to come. Human nature, my friend, is a particular queer thing. It is fitted out with the best qualities. It goes on for a certain time and it drifts back to where Adam and Eve started out. They progress and progress until they think

they know it all, when they are inclined to neglect their good qualities and play with the bad ones."

"When you first came to New York, you thought you had come to the heart of America, if not of the world. And what did you find? You need not tell me any of your experiences", on noticing that I wanted to speak." You found a bedlam of people who seemed to have gone mad. Poor fellows. They surely did not mean to go to the bad. They were just a little bit too easy and too careless. And thus, before they knew it they were swept by foul, filthy waves; jealousy, hatred, lust, falsehood, greed and vain glory, and next thing they found themselves neck-deep in mud. And this was the case with all the world, not only the New Yorkers, mind you".

"Then a terrible storm broke loose. The poor fools all tried to get out of the mud. The more they struggled the deeper they sank. At the psychological moment they heard my father's voice: 'Do not push each other, you poor idiots, hold on to each other. Steady, hold on fast. This way. Now everybody pull; One, two, three!' Then came a terrible crash and groan and the next minute one end of the seething crowd began to alight from the mud. It was a very long and tiresome procedure and when those who survived, for many went under in the struggle,—reached dry land again, there they stood, shivering, most of them stripped to their skin, emaciated, worn out and trembling of fear of something unknown. 'There you are', my father's voice again said. 'Now, look at yourselves and then look at each other. See,

what you have done? Was there any need for all this strife?' And the people looked at each other and then cast down their heads shamefacedly. There was none who could say anything, so dumbfounded were they all. Finally my father again spoke: 'Now, that you have seen one another as you are, go forth and live like brethren'. And the multitude began a new life, realizing, that there really was not so much difference between them. Some had blue eyes, others gray or brown ones. Some had white skin, while others looked tanned, or faded or dark. Yet they all realized that they were of one tribe and therefore resolved to pull together."

"During the past centuries there were great minds trying to save the human race from itself, but the world would not heed them. A terrible catastrophe had to come to make them realize that their real mission was that of conquering each other with love, and not with arms."

While Truth was thus talking I watched the people passing by and the vehicles and then turned my looks to the buildings flanking the street and my eyes finally rested upon the trees alongside of the walks.

"There were no trees on Fifth Avenue, when I was here with Dick", I said.

"No, friend Man. And there are many other things that you would not have found upon your earlier journey. On the other hand, however, there are a great many things that you would miss were I to take you around. This, however, I shall dispense with. You

have not much time to waste. I want you to return to your former task as soon as possible. Yet while you are with me I shall show you one thing worth seeing. The rest you can figure out for yourself or I can explain to you anything you wish to know."

"I remember you having noticed that picture in the bedchamber this morning and I promised you to show you the original. We shall go thither and on our way I shall answer any question you may wish to ask."

We walked for a while. Having regained full possession of my senses. I resolved to avail myself of the opportunity.

"When I first was in New York, as you say forty years ago, I heard some one say that within a few years time there will be an added way of transportation, greatly facilitating travel".

"You mean the aeroplanes?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Well, let me say to the credit of the human race, that this fool dream never came to pass. First it looked as if it were essential to prove advanced civilization that people should fly, instead of walking or riding. But soon they found that what they called progress and civilization was really nothing but madness. So the human race pushed itself back five decades and decided that they shall take time to live."

"Well, thus the human race did not progress in proportion with the time elapsed".

"Forty years ago I should have answered you with a

'yes'. To day I am glad to say that the human race did progress more during these last forty years than in centuries previously. Unheard of hardships, unforeseen troubles and very serious complications made them finally realize that real progress does not mean that we should try to master Nature, but to master ourselves. They have learned at exorbitant expense, too, that too much of a hurry is not good for the liver and that too much money is bad for the heart. And it did not take very much figuring to find out that a well-working liver and a balanced heart are much more essential than a bulging pocket book."

"They have learned not to concern themselves so much with what is good for themselves, the individuals, but with what is good for the community, because if the common good is being steadily promoted the individual is bound to benefit by it. Hence, people do not use aeroplanes as they bought automobiles forty years ago, when many poor fools mortgaged their little homes in order to be in style as owners of motor cars, soon to be out of both. The aeroplane has been perfected and is being used for mail service and also for traveling but no one would think of taking what you used to call a 'joy ride' through the clouds. This would be considered extravagant and would indicate poor taste".

"Indeed, the world has been pushed ahead and this holds good particularly here in America. The average young American has learned to take at least as much interest in his own mental possibilities as he used to take

in the physical possibilities of a prize fighter, a race or a baseball player and people at large have at least acquired the splendid habit to make their own lives; which is not to live any one else's, take their chances, not be afraid of what's back of them or what's before them. Just live the best they know how and live it strong."

"You mean to say that people are not as selfish as they used to be?" I asked.

"I should think it would be more appropriate to say that they are not as stupid as they used to be. I told you before, it looked as if they all had gone mad. There were some who thought they were entitled to conquer the whole world and to rule it as they pleased. They were defeated. And what happened? Their conquerors in turn found themselves drifting into the very same attitude of their antagonists of yore."

Truth took out his kerchief and wiped his brow under the brim of his hat. Then he continued, as if in disgust.

"Then there were others who instead of coming down to brass tacks thought they could readjust the world with dreams. And promptly they dreamed themselves and their followers into lots of trouble. Others again were blabbering about absolute equality,—claiming that all were born equal, consequently they should share equally everything there was. This again added to the muddle and made things worse than ever. Others again thought they could regulate human nature with the letter of the law. They also failed most miserably. By and by they got so worn out and tired and there was hardly any-

thing left but thoughts, so they settled down to do some thinking. And luckily, they started at the beginning. And after a while, after overcoming added trials, muddles and troubles, they began to find themselves. And here we are in a well-ordered community, where people respect each other's right to live, and each other's belief, and creed and tenets and all have the prospect of a happy life."

"And how long will this state last?", I asked.

"This is a question hard to answer. The present improved and really normal state of affairs will not last for ever, of course, for the very simple reason that the world will not last for ever. But people will live happily and peacefully for some time, anyway."

"For how long?"

"Well, until they go mad again", Truth answered nonchalantly.

"Do you realize that by this answer you admitted the possibility of the world's going mad again?"

"Friend Man I do not have to admit this. It lies within human nature."

I was puzzled.

"Does it then", I asked, "not seem useless to strive just to fall back again"?

"No my friend. To struggle is man's mission. He will fall, because of his imperfections. But as long as he does not desire to stay down there is no danger. He will rise again, stronger than ever, to face conditions more complicated than those before. And so man will keep on struggling to the end never to win".

"This seems a paradox and unjust as well", I remarked.

"Yet it is neither, friend Man. The human race is a conglomeration of imperfect beings. Their earthly life is but a transitory state. They will never win in the human sense of the word. But they shall lose or win everything after their days on earth are over with."

After such an exalted talk I hardly dared venture my question. Yet I thought I ought to.

"How about the morality of the race"?

"The human race has come to realize that a regulated family life is the safest foundation for the happiness of the individual as well as of the masses. Of course, there are exceptions. There always were and always shall be. Yet there are few in comparison to the rest and these exceptions but confirm the rule of decent living."

I did so much want to ask Truth whether people still danced at their midday meal and whether they still shook the shimmy. I thought it irrelevant, but he guessed my thought.

"They don't do either," smiling complacently. "The shock of the tremendous crash the world had to undergo is still vibrating in the air."

"You mean to say that the race has been cowed by troubles?"

"No, friend Man. Were such the case, all would have been in vain. That tremendous cataclysm the world had to pass through was not meant to cow them, but simply

to show them their utter folly and to bring them back to their senses."

At this we reached a magnificent structure. It stood upon an open space, surrounded by a well kept lawn.

"Here we are. Come in," Truth bade me.

I followed Truth into a very spacious building. Its tall pillars and high walls, all of white marble, impressed me with their dignity. I noticed there were no seating accommodations, and after having made a few steps I was quite surprised on noticing how uncomfortable the walking was. I looked at Truth walking a few paces ahead of me and noticed that he did not seem to have any difficulties. He turned about, smiling.

"You do not like the floor and do not get the meaning of its contrast with the rest of the building?" he asked coming towards me.

"Indeed, I don't."

"Well, friend Man, we are in Victory Chapel and those responsible for its construction took good care that this memorial should be in keeping with the great thought it expresses and represents." Smiling at me he continued. "Of course, you are thinking of the Great War of forty years ago and imagine that this building is a memorial thereof, do you not?"

"Indeed, I do."

"Well, friend Man, you are quite mistaken", Truth explained. "When America entered into the conflict I think she did so following an impulse of magnanimity. Had she realized the consequences she would never have entered it. Luckily she did not realize them."

"You are puzzling me," I remarked, quite confused.

"Strange, is it not, that the more plain I try to be the more I am apt to cause people what they call confusion", Truth went on. "Listen. You are one of the not so very many survivors of the epoch of forty years ago. You were one of the American heroes. Did you know what you were doing? You did not, but of course you thought you did. Well, what did you think you were doing? You thought you were doing your duty to your country. Why, that is the plain duty of every decent man and not much credit due for so doing. But did you realize what your participation in that war meant and what it was leading to?"

"Yes, the conquest of imperialism".

"Of what?"

"Of imperialism. America entered the war because she thought it was her duty to help the peoples of the world in obtaining a fair chance to govern their own affairs."

"So far, so good", Truth remarked. "And I must admit that America accomplished in that way what she purposed to do, for the government of the various countries and nations of the world of to-day is quite different from what it used to be. True, these much improved conditions are bearing the earmarks of a transitory if not experimental stage, but in course of time the peoples will get there. But there is something by far more important, by far greater than this that was accomplished by America's entry into the war of forty years ago".

Looking at me he must have noticed my perplexity. "I see you do not quite follow me. Now listen. If you had been told that you were going to help reconstruct the world would you have done your duty as willingly as you did?"

"I do not think so".

"And why not?"

"Because I would have thought I was setting out on a fool's errand."

"Now you are talking sense, my friend", Truth said with an air of satisfaction. "And there were a hundred million others who felt like you and who thought that the very idea of reconstructing the world was preposterous if not asinine. That is the reason why I said a little while ago, that it was lucky that America did not realize the consequences of her entry into the strife. Had she been told that by doing so she was assuming not only the task of reconstructing the world, but also the full responsibility of this huge enterprise, the leading Americans of those days would have refused to sacrifice life, limb, wealth and health of their citizens for the sake of trying to carry out a dream that they would have taken for a wild phantasy. Again, I say, therefore, it was most lucky that America entered the conflict following her impulse of maganimity and did not stop to think of the consequences. And why?"

Truth looked at me. I hoped he did not expect me to answer this question, I was, therefore, greatly relieved when he went on.

"Forty years ago America was the only country in the world that had a leg to stand on. She was the only land under the sun able to carry on her normal life in spite of the heavy losses of lives and property she suffered. All of the other countries were bankrupt or on the verge of it. They all looked up to America. Most of them for the sake of material assistance, others again looking for leadership. And America helped wherever she could, not letting the right hand know what the left was doing and eventually and incidentally she became the leader of the world. Not that she claimed or assumed this distinction. It came quite naturally just as the ripe apple will fall into your lap if you are standing underneath the tree and have patience to wait long enough." At these words Truth took my arm, leading me away from the center of the aisle and at the pressure of his hand I again felt invigorated. "We must not block the way. We stopped under one of the windows, of the eastern wall."

"What was business, for instance, forty years ago?"

I could not answer.

"If you needed something you had to pay the price. And the more you needed something the higher a price you had to pay regardless of the value of the goods you were bargaining for. To speak more plainly, business had become a means of exploiting the needs of the consumer instead of facilitating the interchange of the necessities and commodities of life. A publisher, for instance, thought, that he was in his business to make

money as much and as quickly as possible, incidentally throwing some books upon the market. To-day the publishers are supplying the reading public with mental food and their efforts are incidentally rewarded with a fair profit. Forty years ago the theatrical producers, most of them, had a keen eye for sold out houses. The people were restless, high-strung and consequently highly sensuous. What did the producers do? They put on plays that would have a long run and let the real interest of the public go hang. And so it was all along the line."

"Yes, but the public stood for it", I remarked.

"I know it. But if this does explain the way of acting it does not justify it. Those who had influence in business and in publishing books and producing plays and so forth should have deemed it their duty to give people what they needed at reasonable prices, instead of choking down their throats what the public thought it wanted, and that at a murderous profit. So there was something wrong in the leadership. And here is where America came in. She had learned that each country's principal duty is that of keeping its own affairs in good shape. She set out to mind her own business. Quietly and not quietly but surely things and views changed. The other countries, as I said before, were looking to America. At first chiefly for material help. And America responded quite generously, but somehow she managed to do it in a way that those who sought and obtained her assistance were induced to learn how to help themselves. And within a comparatively short time it came to pass that

the place of an armed rivalry was taken by a noble rivalry in improving conditions of life. People are apt to forget, and since the world consists of people, the world, too, is apt to forget. Yet, a good deed well done is bound to bear its fruit and the seed once sown is bound to bring a crop."

"Do you mean to say that America was the only country in the world able to teach others"?

"Indeed not, my friend. Such foolish thought would give my very name the lie. America taught and learned. She lead and was influenced. All the good efforts of the world were being pooled and great results were bound to come. And since I am bound to live up to my name I do not hesitate telling you that after all is said and done it was your country that started this wonderful change and indications bid fair that the great task will be ultimately performed, both nobly and well."

Truth stopped as his talk seemed to attract the attention of people flocking in. He led me into the centre of the building.

"Look around and tell me what you like best".

I first looked at the people coming and going and wondered how lightly they walked on the cobblestone floor. I saw people from all walks of life. Well dressed women, gentlemen in high hats, laborers with their dinner pails, vendors and children. And it struck me strangely that while I could notice no poverty in their appearance I also could not find a trace of extravagance. Involuntarily I looked for Truth. He stood close by.

"You are wondering what these people are doing here and you seem puzzled at their appearance", he said. "Well, my friend, we have class distinctions and always shall have them. The foolish idea of absolute and permanent equality has been discarded after some reckless experiments. But there is no misery here now and no excessive wealth. Conditions have been regulated with the assistance of the most powerful ally of the human race: mutual understanding. And they are coming here to worship." At this Truth looked at his watch. "It is noon. Every one passing by at this time will stop in for a moment and you will witness the same performance evenings. Some few you will find at any hour of the day."

"You said they come here to worship. To worship what?" I asked, my curiosity being aroused. Instead of an answer, Truth pointed to the end of the building.

"Look and see for yourself".

I started towards the indicated point, Truth following close by and soon we stood in front of an altar. It was built of white marble, as the rest of the building, with simple but exquisite carvings. And above the altar I noticed a stained glass window of immense proportions. I looked and looked and cast a questioning glance at Truth. But on noticing that he was kneeling and deep in thought, I resolved to find the meaning of the picture for myself. It was dominated by Christ upon the cross. The allegoric figures of Faith, Hope and Charity removed the nails from the Saviour's hands and feet.

Underneath, in heaps of ruins lay Lust, Perfidy, Hatred, Greed, Vanity and Lie. I returned my looks to Christ. His face shone in contentment, without a trace of pain or sorrow. His head was surrounded by a halo and in between the rays of the halo, I read interwoven the words:

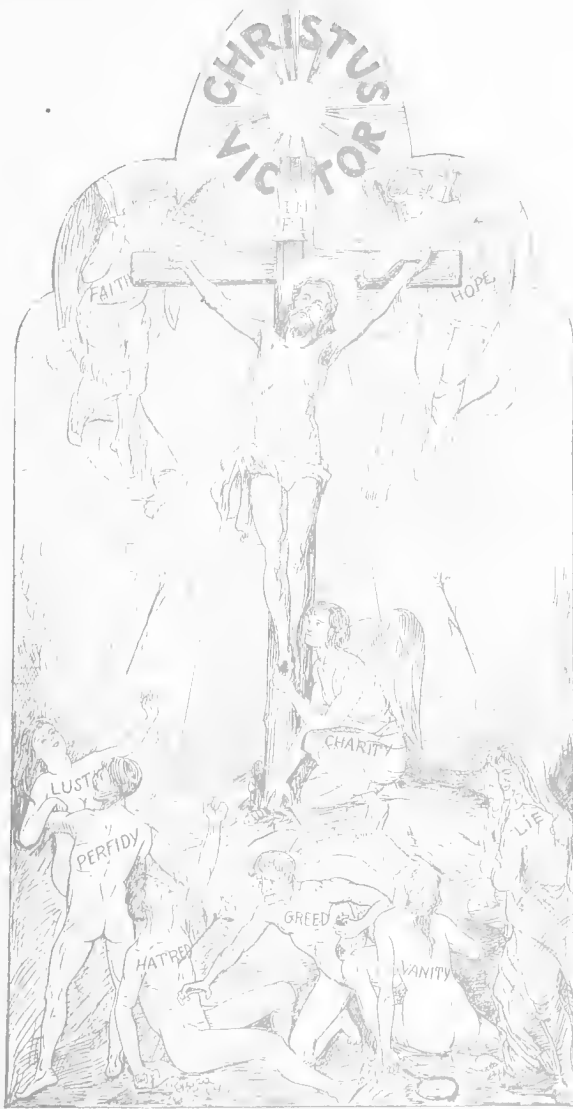
### CHRISTUS VICTOR

Overwhelmed I followed Truth's example and knelt, remaining thus for some time. When Truth rose I followed his example. While leading me towards the entrance he talked.

"Do you understand now what I had reference to when telling you a little while ago of the meaning of this place"?

"Not quite fully", I replied.

"Well, this place is called Victory Chapel and is dedicated not to any armed victory, but to the greatest of all victories; the world has conquered itself. Even those sceptics who are inclined to take Christ's life for a beautiful myth do agree with the idea as expressed by that stained glass window, so magnificent in its simplicity. Even as the self-conquest of the human race must turn Christ's sufferings and agonies into joy, as so fittingly expressed by the wreaths taking the place of the nails, so all the heartaches and troubles and sorrows the world had to suffer, lose their sting and turn into exalted joy upon seeing the wonderful results brought forth. And these cobblestones? Why, they are in keeping with





the allegory and indicate that nothing worth while can be accomplished without serious efforts, that there is no reward, except in the mind of fools, without sacrifice".

Noticing my emotion he gave me a minute's time to gather my thoughts. Then he went on:

"Victory Chapel has been erected with money donated by every race, creed and nationality of the world. Nothing was spared to make it a fitting world-shrine and those who erected it could have paved this chapel with gold and precious stones just as easily as not. But such foolishness would have marred the sanctity of the place".

In passing out of Victory Chapel we walked along Fifth Avenue in silence. I was too overwhelmed to speak. Presently we turned into an inviting-looking building. A servant took our hats and we proceeded into what appeared to be a dining room. The snowy table linen, silver and glassware beckoned us to sit down. Truth chose a small table in the farthest corner. After having taken our seats, a waiter came to take our orders. We partook of a very good meal, which consisted of a soup, a roast with vegetables, some cake and coffee. With the roast a glass of wine was served. Truth, in lifting his glass, silently drank my health. I responded. The pleasant surroundings and the good food worked like a tonic and I soon found my speech.

"Forty years ago I was in a place like this with poor Dick", I ventured.

"I hardly think so", Truth replied. "If there were places like this at that time they must have been very

few and far between. I rather think your friend had taken you to an amusement."

"But we took our meal there", I remarked.

"Why, of course you did. Yet, did you not notice that people amused themselves?"

"Yes, they danced during the meal, which I thought was foolish", I replied.

"Quite so, my friend. Yet do not let us judge harshly. At that time people were restless, almost hysterical. They felt something was brewing and were afraid of the unknown danger. In order to regain their peace of mind they thought they could drown their worries in amusement. They had to be amused, no matter at what price. To-day people look upon amusement as they look upon food or clothing: a necessity. After a day's hard work one needs diversion. The difference between your time and today is that forty years ago most people worked and slaved to be able to throw their money away extravagantly on amusement, food and clothing, while today they amuse themselves moderately, take proper food and wear decent clothes in order to enable them to perform their duties the more cheerfully."

Oh, how I wished I should never have to part with this good fellow who always managed to say the proper thing at the proper time. He again read my thought.

"I shall be with you as long as you honestly wish my company", Truth reassured me smilingly.

The meal over, we took a stroll and then reached Truth's home. I took the opportunity of looking at the

house. It was well built, in keeping with the surroundings but otherwise there was nothing extraordinary in its general appearance.

"Just a comfortable home, cozy to live in", Truth ventured.

We entered, Truth leading me to my room.

"I shall leave you now with your thoughts and memories", he said. "Ours is a very busy household. But I shall be within calling distance". With a friendly nod he left. No sooner had he closed the door behind him than I called him back. In response to my call he stood in the open door.

"Truth", I said, approaching him with outstretched hands, "I almost forgot to thank you".

"To thank me?", he answered, seemingly pleased. "Why, friend Man, you don't owe me any thanks. I was seeking you and you let me find you. So the pleasure is quite mutual, I assure you." And with another friendly nod he left the room.

Alone in this pleasant, cozy room, my looks first turned to the picture over the bed which had attracted my attention in the morning. Now I instantly recognized it as a fine reproduction of the stained glass window at Victory Chapel and went down on my knees, covering my face with my hands. I was afraid to think, so I offered a silent prayer. I could not repeat the words of this prayer, the best I ever had. Perhaps I did not say a word for all I know. But upon rising I felt so refreshed and encouraged. Feeling tired, I sought one

of the comfortable arm chairs. On sitting down I became aware of my bulging coat pockets. First I was afraid, thinking that the onrush of memories, which were bound to rise, would rob me of my composure so recently regained. Nothing of the kind happened. I calmly removed a small package and a bundle of letters from my pockets, laying them both upon the small table. After one minute's thought I first opened the package; I found some official papers, a wrist watch, some money, a pocket knife, and a strange little chain with an oval brass tag. I looked at it wonderingly. It bore my name, a number and the initial of the branch of service I was in: My identification tag. Then I came upon two crosses. One hung from a green ribbon with red stripes. A neat cross of bronze crowned by a wreath. My French war cross. The other one was a more modest looking cross, centered by an eagle. The Distinguished Service Cross. I gazed at them for some time. The smell of powder, the rattle of ordnance, the stench of corpses and the cries of conquest and agony seemed to bother me. I took the two crosses in my hand, and while holding them looked up to the picture hanging over the bed. Then my glance returned to the crosses. Quietly I put them back into their wrappers. Then I rose looking for a good hiding place. In the far corner of the room I noticed a piece of furniture which seemed like a combination of a desk and bookcase. I walked to it, opened one of the small drawers placing the two crosses into it.

"These belong to you, friend Truth", I said to myself.

Then I resumed my seat in the chair and started to busy myself with the letters. . . . .

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Night had come. All was quiet. The members of the household gathered for their usual meeting. Truth did not forget his visitor. He wanted to call him for supper. Quietly he opened the bed chamber.

"Friend Man, we are waiting for you", he said invitingly.

As there was no answer Truth proceeded into the room.

There he found his visitor in the armchair sound asleep, with one open letter in his hand, the others on his lap and strewn about him on the floor. The kindly host lifted his sleeping guest, putting him gently upon the bed. While doing so he glanced at the picture above the bed. Then he piled the letters into a nice little heap, and smiling complacently left the room on tiptoes.







## THE STORY'S END



THE prosperous town of Hopeview was in festal garb on the eve of Independence Day, 1960. Streamers of greenery and flowers wound themselves through streets as if binding the houses together. From the Town Hall, Post Office and School huge flags waved in the evening breeze and a solemn atmosphere seemed to hang over the community. Once, not so very long ago, a village of the backwoods, Hopeview had grown into a town of goodly size and was good to look upon. The clank of the street car broke the silence at intervals and people returning from the fields mixed picturesquely with vehicles of every description.

The side walks were clean and lined with trees. The buildings bespoke the good taste and the prosperity of their inhabitants. The town was surrounded by wide lawns, and a well kept road led to a neat railroad station. Who would have thought this possible, say, just forty years ago. To the north the town was flanked by what first seemed to be a flower garden. Upon closer examination it proved to be the cemetery. Simple yet neat monuments marked the graves, all of them covered with flowers.

Everything breathed content and happiness. As on the eve of a sacred holiday, one felt elated and thankful.

In front of the Town Hall a stone-covered well sent gushing forth its clear streams of water. The neat structure was topped by a huge eagle, with outstretched wings. It seemed to protect the community. The school-house across the square, a neat two story brick building, bore a brass tablet with the simple legend:

TO THE MEMORY OF  
MR. MAN  
(1914)

The third corner of the square was occupied by a neat church. A brownstone structure, its door ajar. Upon entering one was attracted by a stained glass window, representing Christ upon the cross, three angels replacing the nails with small wreaths of forget-me-nots. On leaving the church, one block to the south, a white building with green shutters beckoned invitingly. Two large pots with geraniums showed the door. Above the door a sign told that this was "The Homestead", Hopeview's hotel. A few doors farther to the south the eye was caught by a dwelling. One story high, with a gabled roof. A well kept lawn surrounded the handsome building, which was banked with flowers. Here we enter.

It was supper time. At the head of the table we notice a gray haired lady. Very, very old she must have been, but her eyes bespoke her vitality and how happily she

looked around the table. To her right a man of some sixty odd years busied himself with helping the old lady to a dish of some sort. To the left of the lady a pleasant looking woman, also quite advanced in years yet looking young, watched the two. While the fourth of the company, a sturdy man in the early forties sat quietly absorbing the rest with his looks.

Mr. Man's home was a happy one indeed. Dear old Mrs. Man was granted the great joy and privilege of seeing her village grow into a prosperous town. And how proud she felt! And justly so. Was it not her son who helped the town to its growth and development. Indeed, Mr. Man, as the first Mayor of Hopeview, in his quiet, unassuming way, was tireless in helping build up his home town. His son and successor in office, was he not her grandson? And did they not both carry out the principles of her late husband? What more could a mother's heart wish for?

Ann Mary, Mrs. Man Junior, was a good housewife and made the reclining days of her mother-in-law pleasant and happy. Rosie was married to the Postmaster, Mr. Benjamin, Young Ben of years ago. Beth was likewise married. She was long in coming home, having been retained by illness. Then a last word came that "They" are homeward bound. They? Yes, indeed, Beth and her husband, a worthy Frenchman, whom she had married somewhere in the Argonne district. And the French son-in-law, with the fluent oratory characteristic of his nation, used his gift of persuasion to in-

duce Mrs. Man to return with them to Argonne for the rest of her days. At that time Mrs. Man was not quite as old as she is now, and indeed the thought of ending her life in her native home was rather alluring. But there was her husband's grave, and her children and Hopeview. So she decided to stay, and the French son-in-law did likewise.

Mr. Man, the mayor, looked the picture of his father, He was a manly man and his most prominent characteristic was his devotion to his parents. Even though Mayor of the town he never wished to be more than his father's son. Consequently he was kind to every one, "straight as a die", as grandmother said, and in turn respected by the entire community.

After the table was cleared, grandmother led by Ann Mary, as was their custom, whenever they were alone at meals, left to pay her children a short visit. Rosie and Beth were neighbors. The two men, as was likewise according to custom, sat down upon the green bench in front of the house, the same that their father and grandfather had built, and where Fr. John used to sit, and chatted.

The quiet of the evening was delightfully interrupted by the twitter of the birds in the trees. The setting sun strewn the scenery with a mist of light purple hue and the world seemed so restful. For a while father and son smoked quietly.

"I hope the weather stays nice for to-morrow", the father remarked. "I should feel sorry to see the plans for the celebration marred".

"Maybe a rain would serve but to emphasize the meaning of the day, father", Mayor Man replied.

"You are right, my son. Where there is sunshine there is rain close at hand and the other way around. Did you have any difficulties in making the final arrangements"?

"No, father. Every one responded most willingly and I hope you will enjoy the celebration", the son replied with a mysterious smile.

"First we shall go to church, as usual, I suppose", the father said casually. Then looking at his son, "You seem to act rather mysteriously of late. What have you got up your sleeve?"

"Oh, nothing, father. This afternoon I had a final meeting with the leading citizens of the town and after the very simple program had been finally decided upon, I asked those present for the privilege of giving the town a little surprise which I did not wish to include in the official program. But in this I shall need your assistance".

"What might it be, my son"?

"As a matter of fact I owe you an apology", the Mayor said, hesitatingly, "as I planned this surprise all by myself, without even consulting you and now I cannot carry out my plan without your assistance". He felt somewhat uneasy.

"You act so mysteriously that if I did not know you, I might suspect that you hired a brass band or a circus, maybe. Well, what is it my son"?

"Now, father, promise you will not bear me any ill feeling".

"Sounds important. I promise. Now let's have it.

The mayor coughed.

"You are to make a speech at the cemetery".

"Where did you get that idea, my son", the father replied earnestly. "You know how I hate notoriety. During all my years as your predecessor in office I did not make one public speech. I do not like the limelight and all that goes with it, and you know it. Frankly, I am not a bit pleased at your idea."

"I thought that much," the mayor replied. "But then it is your fault".

The father gave his son a look of mild surprise.

"My fault? How do you make that out"?

"Well, father, did you not teach me to learn how to subordinate my personal feelings, desires and ambitions to the good of the community?"

"Indeed I did and should have been a mighty poor father had I done otherwise. Public spiritedness is what we need above all. It was this that made our country great and the lack of it was the cause of most of the troubles and difficulties that were abroad years ago. Yet, my son, you must pardon if I tell you frankly that I do not quite see the point of your plan, or surprise, as you call it".

"Listen, father. You rose to be the leading citizen of this community and you know it. No, I do not want you

to admit it. I know you never would. Yet the fact remains that you are what you are and" . . . .

"Now, my boy, enough of that. Do not try to tell me what I am. That's immaterial. Give me some good reasons for my cooperation in your plan and I shall yield".

"Well, father, you had more experience than any one else in town" . . . . .

"Which does not mean by far that I should let loose a public speech upon a harmless community", the father interrupted.

"And you also taught me that only one should talk at a time", the son retorted smilingly.

"Now you've got me. Go On".

"The people of Hopeview wish to hear you. They feel you have a message. Grandmother wishes it, Ann Mary, and Rosie, and Beth, and, last but not least, the mayor of the community requests it", with a playful air of superiority.

"Mr. Mayor, your point is well taken. Yet I hesitate", the father doffing his hat with a kindly smile.

"Well, father, there are others who would tell you they wish it also. And I feel I am speaking for them".

"You mean your grandfather"?

"Yes, and Unk, and my father-in-law and all the rest who have left us too soon".

The strong man seemed to hesitate.

"These reasons are good but, I am sorry to say, more

or less sentimental. Can you give me a good reason *pro bone publico*?"

"I think I can. For the first time to-morrow we shall celebrate Independence Day the way this holiday should be really celebrated. This is largely the result of your efforts of many years. Since you do not like sentimental reasons, I will not say that you have the best claim to tell the people what that day really means. But I do say, even at the risk of offending your modesty, that you know more about it than any one else in Hopeview".

Just as the father was about to make another remark the women returned. Grandmother, led by Ann Mary.

"Gentlemen," grandmother addressed the two, leaning on her daughter-in-law's arm, smiling happily, "I am here to convey to you a suggestion of my daughter Beth".

The two men rose, bowing complacently.

"I shall take pleasure in complying with your unuttered suggestion ladies and give you a speech forthwith", the mayor said, looking from the corner of his eye at his father.

"Don't you get fresh, Mr. Mayor," said the father with a friendly poke at his son's side.

The women laughed. Then presently Mrs. Man suggested that they walk out to the cemetery. Then, reaching into her bodice she drew forth a tiny flag.

"I want to give this to your father, so he will not forget to be with us to-morrow".

Presently Rosie and Beth came with their husbands and quietly they started for the cemetery.

On the way home, Mr. Man and his son lagged behind.

"It's a bargain, my son", the father said, pressing his son's hand.

Hopeview was up early on July the Fourth, 1960.

At eight o'clock there was a short service of thanksgiving at the church, all of the towns-people attending in their Sunday best. Their outward appearance as regards the "Sunday best" did not show any marked difference from that on like gatherings years ago. But their faces were bright and bespoke a happiness never before known. Fr. Andrew, now successor to the lamented and beloved rector, and an old man himself, in his short address referred to the stained glass window, briefly impressing its significance upon the minds of his hearers. After the service the entire congregation filed out of the church, forming a procession on the public square. First came the children, then the women, followed by the men. There was seemingly no one to give orders or instructions. The procession was in line in no time and without the least hitch. Perfect harmony was the keynote. Mr. Man Senior leaning on his heavy cane, limped between his son, the mayor, and the priest.

The procession walked silently down Main Street, then covered the side streets and returned to the square. There they stopped. The next instant the bells of the church began to toll and the procession moved solemnly toward the cemetery.

At the entrance to the cemetery a number of young girls, dressed in white, formed lines on either side, and from huge baskets standing at their sides handed every one of the passers by a small bunch of neatly bound wild flowers.

They filed into the cemetery, stopped in the center and then quietly disbanded, all seeking the graves of their loved ones, placing the flowers upon the graves and offering a silent prayer.

Then, as if at an unseen sign, the people again gathered in the middle of the cemetery, this time not forming into a line of procession, but standing up in a semi-circle, leaving an open space in the center. All was quiet. Then the heads began to turn and all eyes were focussed upon the man who stood there amongst them, leaning on his cane.

Mr. Man moved towards the center.

"Friends, last night my boy told me you wished to hear me: I guess he was right. But what am I to say to you?" At this he looked around, deep emotion writ upon his kindly countenance.

"Today we are celebrating Independence Day. I might say for the first time in a way appropriate to the meaning of this great holiday."

"Here in the midst of our loved ones who have gone before us, we stand", at which words all heads were bared, "with bared heads. And let us be thankful that our hearts are full. With joy? Perhaps. With pride? No. With deep gratitude toward a kind Providence."

"If every one of us did his share during the past years full of cares and troubles, we have but done our duty, hence, there is no room for pride."

"Should our conscience be telling us that we might have done better, than let us bow our heads humbly, firmly resolved to do better in the future".

"And if we ask ourselves who brought about this wonderful change, our heart answers us that it was the power from above and the noble traditions as inherited by those great men who laid the foundations of our country."

"Not so many years ago this world was a seething cauldron of wild passions let loose. To-day the world is at peace and our country is happy with the rest. Some like to say that it was America which brought about all this. If it is so, let this not turn our heads. The country feels no vain pride to-day and I am sure that while the entire nation is celebrating this great holiday, the undercurrent vibrating through the hearts of all is not that of pride, but of humble satisfaction."

"Quite a few of you here present remember the time when our country was called the great melting pot. Many talked about it, very few, if any, knew its meaning. If to gather the scum of the world was equal to being a melting pot, so it was. If our mission was to take care of ourselves first so as to show the rest of the world how it can be done, then I accept the reference to the melting pot in the noble sense of the word."

"I know there are many amongst you who hail

from other countries. But, I see but one flag. The Stars and Stripes. And we have no foreigners amongst us in the sense as we used to have."

"We are all Americans and proud of it. And likewise, there are many of our brethren and sisters, who were born in America, living now in different countries. They do not claim any privileges in their respective countries of adoption."

"As regards this country in particular, formerly immigration was encouraged, even solicited by certain agencies as the natural result of which we got not only those who came to these shores led by the desire to enjoy freedom or to improve their living conditions, but those as well who by coming to this country tried to escape prison, their military obligation or even honest work, the latter thinking that all they had to do here was to pick up the dollars from the sidewalk. We were far too easy-going with our immigration. And great harm was done through our benevolent carelessness both to the country as well as the immigrants. The latter, many of them, not conversant with our ways of living, took liberty for license and thus speedily drifted towards perdition meanwhile becoming public charges, while the country found itself face to face with a situation the peculiarity of which could be equalled only by its seriousness".

"To-day our immigrants know fully well that while they are heartily welcome, they have to live up to the requirements of their intended country of adoption or else return to whence they came."

"The past years have taught us a great lesson and America as well as her new citizens are deriving the benefits thereof as well as the world at large. Every one knows today that no one can serve two masters. And surely we ought to be thankful for the light that was given us by which to see the proper meaning of patriotism and loyalty".

"The world has learned the lesson of 'One God, One Flag, One Country'."

"Great was the price the world had to pay for this but greater still is the reward. Every nation of the world knows to-day that the best and only guarantee for its happy and prosperous future does not rest with a tremendous military force but with the uniform efforts of their hosts of thinking citizens armed with a clear mind and a strong heart. And let me tell you, friends, of Hopeview, that as long as the world will maintain its present attitude, bought at an enormous price and obtained through tremendous sacrifices, there is no room for despondency."

"Let every citizen or every country do his best by his country be it native or adopted and every country will be happy. And since this world is a conglomeration of many countries, what else can be the result of the happiness of its various parts, but a sincere and humble feeling of gratitude of the whole".

"Keep on doing your duty, my friends. Be mindful of the fact that every good deed well done bears its reward and do not forget that we are not to look for

outward signs of our reward, but we should desire the possession of a clear conscience that whispers to us when we are all alone; 'well done'."

"So then before leaving this sacred place let us humbly bow our heads in gratitude".

The minute the speech was ended every head bent down for a short while. Then the people formed into procession, walking silently back to the public square, where they disbanded in pleasant chatter, every one seeking their homes where they were to continue celebrating the great day in quiet happiness.

[THE END]











